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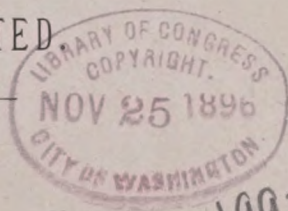
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FROM

GARDEN AND FIELD.

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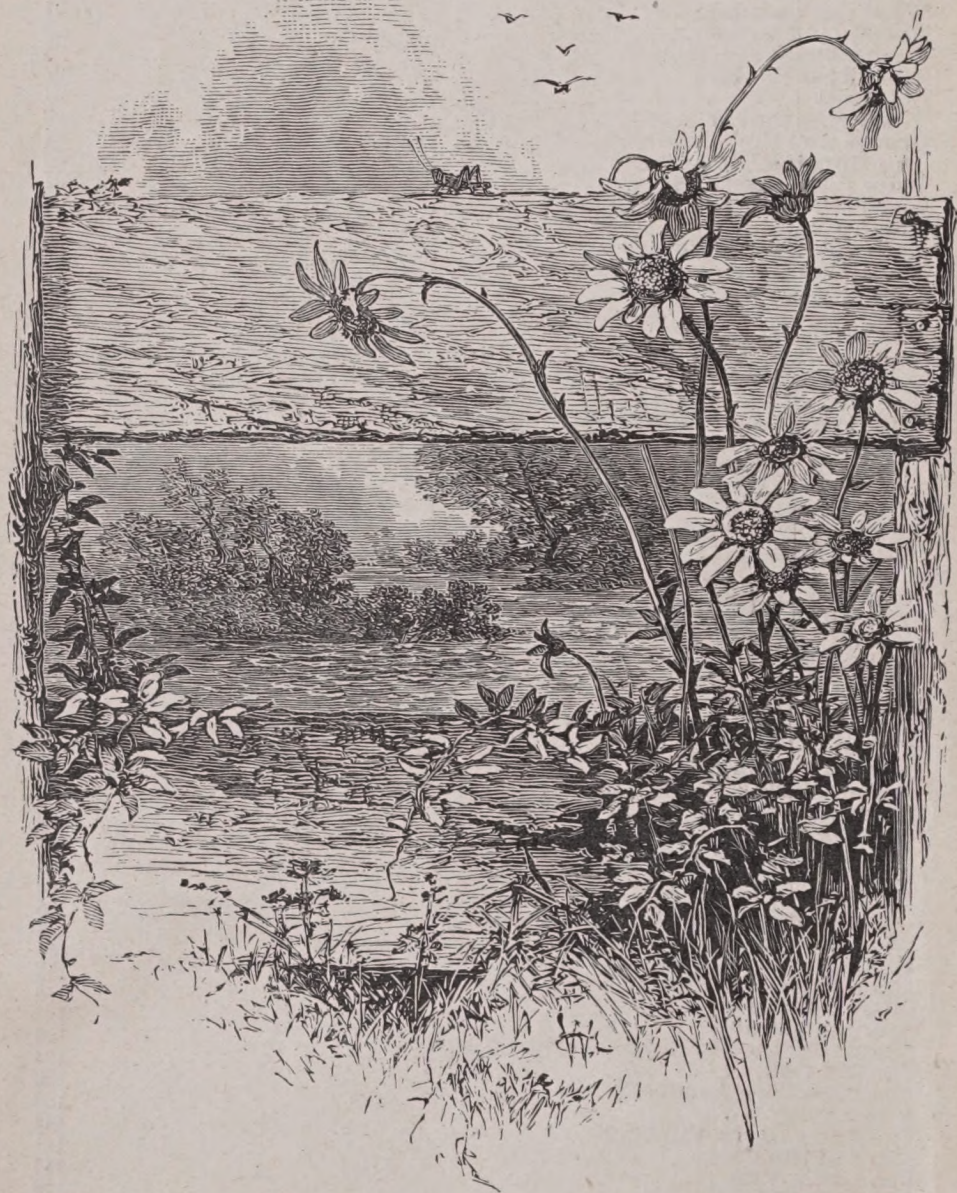
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STORIES FROM GARDEN AND FIELD.



"If mother Nature patches the leaves of trees and vines,
I'm sure she does her darning with the needles of the pines;
They are so long and slender, and somewhere in full view,
She has her threads of cobweb, and a thimble made of dew."

"O dear, O dear," fretted a little Pine.
"How I hate these needle-like leaves of mine.
Other trees have broad, green leaves, and in
the fall they change to such rich colors of red
and yellow."

"If I could have made my own choice, I
would have crowned myself with shining leaves

that should have put to shame every other tree in the forest.

"They should have been broader than any other leaves, and they should have shone in the sun, dazzling the eyes of every-body that looked at them."

Then the sun sank behind the distant hills, and the discontented little tree went to sleep. And while it slept, real golden leaves — just what it had wished for began to bud upon its branches.

At daybreak the leaf-buds burst forth, and all the trees wondered to see the golden beauty of this little Pine tree.

How proud it was! All day long it shook its golden leaves and laughed to see them glisten!

But at night — poor tree! — a robber came; seized upon the leaves and carried them everyone away.

The little Pine tree's joy was turned to sorrow. It hung its head and sighed itself to sleep.

"O, if I had only wished for leaves of crystal glass instead of burnished gold?" were

the last words the little tree whispered as she fell asleep.

But again a wonderful thing happened! Leaves of crystal glass,—just such as the Pine had wished for — grew and covered the poor little bare branches.

And in the morning when the sun shone upon them, they sparkled and danced and sent out all the beautiful colors of the rainbow.

“O, this is a thousand times more beautiful!” laughed the Pine tree. And again she danced and sang all day for joy.

But when night came the wind arose; a dreadful hail-storm beat down upon the grove. Even the strong old trees bowed beneath it; and the little Pine’s leaves of crystal glass were shattered and broken in pieces.

“O dear, O dear,” sobbed the little tree, “I have learned it is very foolish in me to wish for beauty greater than that of the trees about me. I will be content after this if I may have leaves like those of the trees about me — just simple green leaves. I will not wish even for the silver linings that the poplar’s have.”

Again the little tree slept. And again a wonderful change came upon the leaves.

The broken pieces of crystal glass faded away, and in their place, burst out a host of fresh green leaves, very small and pale, and very beautiful in the morning sun.

The little Pine sighed a great sigh of contentment when she awoke and knew what had happened.

"What a foolish tree I have been, to suppose I should have leaves of gold or crystal. These are very beautiful," she said.

But the little Pine had not learned the lesson yet. For by and by a little colt came frisking along. "These leaves will make just the daintiest breakfast!" said the little colt. "I like fresh green leaves. O, how sweet these are!" nor did he stop until every branch had been stripped of its beauty.

Then the little Pine burst into tears. She moaned and sobbed and rocked herself to and fro in her grief.

"O, that I had my own needles back again!" she cried. "At least they made me no trouble. They were green and smooth; and sometimes

in the sunlight and with the dew upon them they were even beautiful. Mother Nature knew what was best for me after all, and I have been a foolish, foolish tree."

The little Pine cried itself to sleep that night; but good kind Mother Nature pitied her, and came and leaned over her and kissed her.

In the morning, strange to say, when the little Pine awoke, there, in very truth, were her own dear needles safe and sound.

Tears of joy sprang up in the little Pine's heart. She gave a deep sigh of rest and contentment. Very likely if you and I had been there, we should have thought it was the wind we heard among the needles. And the tears? — very likely we should have called them dew-drops sparkling among the needles.





THE HAPPY LITTLE BIRCH.

"Was there ever such a spring as this!" cried the little birch.

"How many springs have you ever seen?" asked the old oak, looking down with a kindly smile upon the little dancing birch.

"Only two or three I know," laughed back the birch; "but I am so happy, so happy. The air is so soft! The sun is so warm! I cannot keep from dancing!"

Just then two little boys ran into the field where the oak and the birch were talking.

"Pooh! I am stronger than you are," said one little boy to the other. "See! I can break

down that birch tree." And he ran and threw his weight upon the trunk of the little tree.

Snap, crack, and the little birch's leaves were down in the grass, for the slender trunk was broken.

Then the two little boys went away; and never even dreamed of how much happiness they had destroyed that sunny morning in the early spring.

There was a pitiful little quiver in the leaves as the birch fell. But the boys did not hear that; or if they did, they thought it was only the wind among the branches.



THE RUNAWAY VINES.

"Let's run away," said two little vines one day.

"We are tired of this dark corner."

So away they ran, across the garden walk,

up the tree, along the branches, then with a leap sprang straight into little Ethel's bedroom window.

They were sure Ethel would be glad to see them. Would you have been glad if you had been Ethel?

CAPS AND BLANKETS.

"May we go out to play?" asked the Pussy-Willow children one day.

"Are your caps and blankets ready?"

"Our caps have been on our heads all winter, but our blankets are n't quite ready."

"Who ever heard of Pussy-Willows being seen without blankets?" said their mother.
"Wait a week."

They waited till their white fuzzy blankets were done, then they started out to see the world. Look on the tree and you will see them playing hide-and-seek.





THE NORTH WIND AND THE SNOW PRINCESS.

The days are growing short. The trees and fields are brown and bare. No cheery song is heard in the forest save the chirp of the merry little chickadee.

Now is the time to look for the gruff, old North Wind, who roars and growls and howls across the plains, scattering the brown, dry leaves and bending even the sturdy oaks beneath his power.

A testy cross old fellow this North Wind seems to be, as he goes shrieking around the corners and up and down our chimneys; but after all he is not so cruel as he seems.

Did you ever watch the beautiful cloud-horses that he drives across the sky; and the shining cloud-chariot in which he sits? The little stars laugh down at him; and the louder

he roars, the happier their sparkling eyes shine out.

“Boo-oo-oo!” he cries; but his cold breath lays a beautiful shining cover over lakes and rivers and ponds and the happy waters go sparkling along almost as happy as if the sun shone down upon them.

But best of all he brings the little Snow Princess with him. And such a beautiful, little Princess she is!

Her robes are snowy white; her eyes are sparkling in the sunlight, and she floats down from her home above and touches the brown leaves and shrubs, the bare rocks and fields with her soft and gentle hand.

Often the little Princess comes in the still, gray morning when all the world is asleep; sometimes she comes when the darkness falls; and then she works all night long to make the earth beautiful for the Sun to shine upon.

She floats over the fields and across the lakes; she dances along the hedgerows; she reaches up and kisses the tree-tops; she bends down and softly touches the tiny grasses and little shrubs.

She strews her shining crystals up and down the forest paths, and all along the roads; she loads the branches with precious jewels; she covers the housetops and fences.

But best of all she covers the little, sleeping flowers with her soft, warm blanket and whispers a great secret in their ears — a secret that only she and they can understand.

And she tells them of another beautiful Princess — the Rain Fairy she is called — that shall come by and by to wake them up, when they have finished their long sleep.

Then when the flowers and the trees are rested, and the little plant babies in their cradles begin to long to reach forth their tiny hands, the old North Wind takes the little Snow Princess up in his big, strong arms, and away they fly to the Land of Frost.

There they dwell in a towering iceberg palace whose colors are like those of the rainbow and whose towers are like the mountain tops.

But before they hurried away the old North Wind, whom some people think loves only to destroy the beauty of the autumn, called to the

soft South Wind and to the little Rain Fairy who comes always with the soft South Wind.

"The beautiful, tall trees are ready for you! And the tiny flowers are waiting for you!" the North Wind called, and the soft South Wind answered, "I am coming! I am coming!"

And when the North Wind heard the soft whisper, he roared with joy and drove his cloud-steed across the sky with a speed that made the sun himself look with wonder upon the flying chariot.



The little Snow Princess danced with joy. "The flowers are waking! the flowers are waking!" she cried; and the beautiful colors in her robe grew brighter and brighter.

Then she shook down millions upon millions

of tiny snowflakes and covered the earth anew; she heaped them up as high as the fences; she loaded the trees till they could hardly hold themselves erect.

Some of the earth children grumbled and said, "O dear! another snow-storm!" But the Snow Princess knew, and the flowers knew, and the tree roots knew that this last snow-storm was the Snow Princess' very best gift of all the winter.





LEGEND OF THE IRIS.

It was a day of sunshine and showers. The sun shone; the raindrops glistened; the clouds chased each other like happy children across the sky. The flowers breathed out their sweetest; the grass looked its freshest; the whole earth was alive and happy.

"Let us hold a festival," said the flowers. "A festival of the Rainbow on this day of sunshine and shower!"

Every blade of grass danced for joy. The sun burst out into a broad, warm light. A festival, festival of the Rainbow!

Then the flowers gathered themselves together upon a sunny hillside. Each one came

dressed in its own wondrous beauty. But amidst them all the beautiful blue Iris shone the loveliest. No other one wore her jewels so gracefully. Her robe was deep blue like the twilight sky. And it was as softly shaded as the cloudlets.

Who was this fair stranger? No one knew. 'Twas strange, but no one could name this fair flower, so bright, so blue.

At last some sister flower cried, "See, see the rainbow colors of her beautiful robe."

Just then the rain began to fall, the rainbow came out in all its glory, and sure enough, there were the rainbow colors shining in the rain.

"Iris! Iris! The rainbow messenger!" cried the sister flowers. "Let us call her Iris!"





THE BURDOCK.

"What am I good for? I should like to know," moaned the Burdock.

"Beautiful ladies have come and gathered the golden-rod and the asters, and even the maple leaves, that we call useless when the tree shakes them off, have been gathered up by the city people and have been admired and carried away as if they were pure gold."

"Nobody has even looked at me; or if they have, they have cried out, 'Don't go near those burdocks! Horrid things! one can never get rid of them!'"

"O those lovely burdocks! See, nurse, see!" cried a little, yellow-haired girl who had just climbed through the pasture bars.

"Let us gather a whole apron full; they are so nice to play with. Mamma and I gathered some last fall when we were here, and I made the loveliest chairs and tables and everything out of the burrs."

The burdock bush fairly trembled with joy. "I am of use! I am of use!" it laughed to itself. "Beautiful little girl," laughed the burrs; "we will cling to her forever, won't we?"



WHAT THE OAK SAID.

James was a wood-cutter. He lived just on the edge of a thick forest.

One day when he had chopped and chopped until the grand old oak had fallen with a great crash, he sat himself down beside it to rest.

"It is no easy work to bring down these old trees," said he, "I may as well rest a while."

Very soon the leaves of the old oak began to rustle. This means, in tree language, that they began to talk.

"Do not sigh, little pines; do not weep, little birches," said the oak. "Be brave, and keep on growing. We have been very happy here together and I have been very proud to spread my big leaves above you when you were too young and tender to bear the hot sun's rays. O little birches, little willows, don't forget the old oak that loved you so. He will be very lonesome when these men carry him away from his forest home; but he will try to keep brave in thinking of the long, long years we have been happy here together."

"Do trees talk to each other like that?" said James to himself as he walked out from the forest at night. "Jean," said he to his wife when he reached home, "I shall never cut another tree."

And the trees on the edge of the forest heard what the wood-cutter said. Such a happy rustle as went through their leafy

boughs. They told the trees next them: and they told the next, and they told the next, till the whole forest was alive and every tree was dancing with joy.

"Do hear the wind!" said Jean; for she did not know that the leaves could talk together.



THE MOUNTAIN ASH.

"My beautiful mountain ash!" said a little sick child, looking out of her window into the dirty yard below.

"Such pretty flowers as it has now, and such pretty red berries as it has in the fall. I am so glad the pretty tree grows here so near my window."

And the tears came into the little child's eyes; for she was lame and sick and often her suffering was all she could bear.

"That miserable tree!" exclaimed the landlord, coming into the yard just then.

"John, cut down that ash. Its branches are scratching the paint on the house."

So down came the tree that was so tall and beautiful, and had given the little sick child so much joy. "My poor tree, my poor tree," sobbed the little girl.

"My poor little girl, my poor little girl," moaned the tree as it fell to the ground.



THE OAK AND THE VIOLETS.

The summer had gone. Very soon the winter would come.

Beneath the old oak tree two little violets were peeping up through the fallen leaves. It was strange these two little violets had blossomed so late. Perhaps they had overslept. Some little folks do, you know. At any rate, there they were, the only flowers in the whole grove.

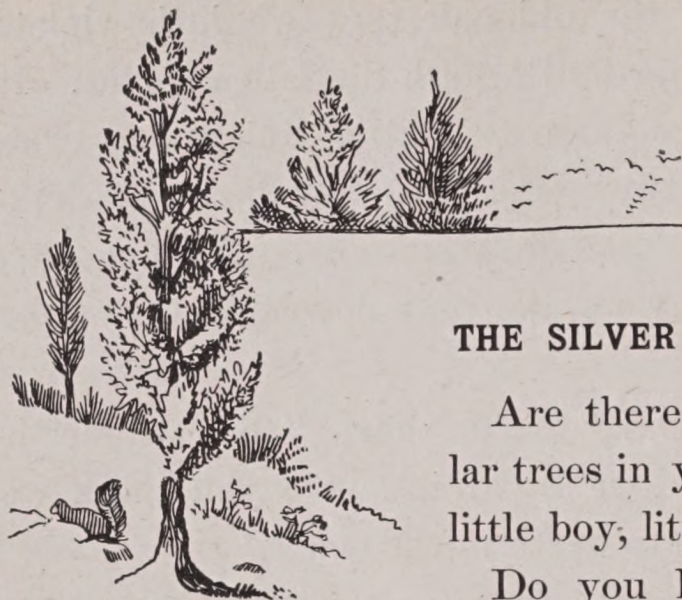
"Dear Oak," said they, "the winter is coming, and we are afraid. Do you think we shall freeze to death in the cold?"

The oak looked down upon the little blue flowers and spread its great branches over them very tenderly.

"I will take care of you," it said. And then the great oak leaves began to fall, silently, softly, until the little violets were all covered over; and there they lay snug and warm until the next spring-time came.

Then they smiled up at their good friend, the oak, again.

Do you not think the oak was glad to see his little friends again? I think he was for he rustled his leaves, and every one of them danced a welcome to the violets.



THE SILVER POPLARS.

Are there any poplar trees in your town, little boy, little girl?

Do you know why their branches stand always so straight in the air? Listen.

Once Mother Nature lost a bag of silver that she had hidden away beneath a mountain.

"The trees have stolen your silver," whispered the West Wind.

"The trees!" cried Mother Nature. "I will see." So up and down the earth she went asking of every tree, "Have you stolen my silver?"

"I! I! stolen your silver!" exclaimed the poplar, pretending to be very much shocked.

"There it is this minute!" cried Mother Nature, "I see it under your leaves. No, no,

keep your arms up. Keep them up always. And the silver I will leave there forever that all the world may know what a wicked thief you are."



CAT-TAILS.

"You are very pretty," said the happy faced Marsh Marigold to the Cat-tails. "I like to watch your long blades waving in the wind; but I wish you had some of the rich gold Nature has given me."

"Never mind, dear Marsh Marigold," answered the Cat-tails. "It is quite enough for us to look down upon your glorious color. How bright you make this swampy place. We should be very dull without you."

Then the Marsh Marigold cuddled closer to the Cat-tails, and the Cat-tails bent very lovingly over her.

By and by the Marigolds all went to sleep. The Cat-tails grew taller and taller, and the velvety brown blossoms came.

One day a beautiful young lady came to the swamp. She had a sweet face; and people called her an artist.

"These beautiful rich brown Cat-tails!" said she, gathering an armful. "And this is the very swamp where we gathered those lovely Marsh Marigolds last spring."

Very carefully she carried the Cat-tails home. Then she tied a great rich orange bow about them and fastened them on the wall.

The Cat-tails were proud indeed; but when they looked around the room, what do you think they saw? Their old friends of the early spring as true as you live! The dear little Marsh Marigolds!

You and I would have said it was only a painted picture; but there are pictures that have souls, and surely this was one of them, for the Marsh Marigolds smiled across at the

Cat-tails with just that same happy smile that the Cat-tails had so loved the spring before.

Friendly little cat-tails,
Growing close together,
Crowding marsh and shallow stream
Through all the autumn weather.

Strange, mysterious cat-tails,
Children's great delight,
Brown and velvety without,
Within all fluffy white!



THE SWEET CLOVER.

"How sweet the air is!" laughed the little clover blossom, dancing on her little branch.

"Why, you blessed little clover blossom, don't you know it is yourself that makes the

air so sweet this bright morning?" said Mother Nature looking down tenderly on her darlings.

"We?" answered the clovers, spreading out their pretty leaflets in surprise. "We — make the air sweet? That is strange?"

"Listen, and perhaps you will find that what I say is true," answered Mother Nature, hurrying away to wake up some lazy little Four o'clocks.

"I wonder what Mother Nature could have meant," the innocent little clovers whispered to themselves, "But we will wait, somebody will tell us by and by."

"Dear little clovers," murmured Mother Nature to herself, as she went away. "There isn't one shadow of vanity in those children. They do not dream how sweet they are. Perhaps if they did, everybody would not love them so."

"O Lillie, Lillie! There is a clover around here somewhere in the grass. Don't you smell it? Let's hunt for it. O how sweet it makes the air!" These were the words that burst in on the ears of the clover later in the day when they were taking their afternoon nap.

The little clovers were wide awake in an instant. They looked at each other and blushed pinker and pinker. "Now we know what Mother Nature meant," they whispered to each other.



CROCUS AND THE SNOWDROP.

"Tap, tap, tap." "Listen," whispered the little Crocus to her half-sister Snowdrop. "What is that?"

"Tap, tap, tap." "I hear it," said the Snowdrop. "It is the rain—the soft spring rain. He has come to call us up."

"But I am very sleepy," said the little Crocus, and she fell fast asleep again.

Little Snowdrop turned in her little bed, stretched out her little feet, then pushed up her little head to see.

Everywhere the earth was all white and cold. There was snow on the ground. But it was not very deep snow, and the warm sun was melting it very fast.

"Tap, tap, tap," called the rain again, and this time up came little sleepy Crocus.

Snowdrop was glad of little Crocus for company, for it was very lonely through the long, cold nights.

And by and by the Hyacinths and the Daffy-down-dillies came. Then such a merry time as these early flowers had of it, waiting for the leaves and the other flowers to come.





THE MORNING-GLORY SEEDS.

Never was there so happy a little girl as Margaret this bright, warm day.

She dug up the earth, raked it and smoothed it over, until the little flower bed was as soft and smooth as her own little bed upstairs.

Margaret did not hear the little seeds sing their sweet good bye to her as they cuddled down in the soft, warm earth to make themselves ready for their growth by and by.

For nine long days and nine long nights the seeds lay there in the dark.

"If we only had a few drops of water," they sighed. "O Earth, please give us a few drops of water to soften our hard brown coats."

"I wish I could," answered the earth. "I am very parched and dry myself. But you must ask the Rain to help you. I can do nothing without him."

"O Rain," called the little seeds, "please

give us a few drops of water. Each one of us has two little seed-leaves inside this hard brown coat of ours; but they cannot burst through into the sunlight until we have moisture all around us in the Earth."

"I wish I could help you," said the Rain; but I can do nothing unless the Clouds will help, too. You must ask them to dip down lower if you would have moisture fall upon the Earth."

Then the little Seeds called again, "O Clouds, please dip low down that we may have some water to drink. We and Mother Earth are so parched and dry."

"Poor little Seeds," answered the Clouds. "We would be so glad to help you; but you must ask the Sun to draw a mist across his face. Then, perhaps, we can gather and send down the rain you ask for."

Again the little Seeds cried—this time to the Sun. "O dear Sun, will you not draw a veil of mist across your face for a little time, so that the rain clouds may gather?"

"We are so parched and dry, and our seed-leaves are longing to reach up above the dry

Earth and stretch themselves out into beautiful vines."

"Poor little Seeds," said the great generous-hearted Sun. "You shall have the rain you ask for. To-morrow when I rise, I will draw the mist over my face. The earth will grow cool. The clouds will dip down, and then, *patter, patter, patter* — down will come the big raindrops."

The sun did not forget his promise. By and by the clouds grew blacker and blacker. They spread out over the whole sky.

For four long days the rain fell. First a hard shower, then a long gentle rain. The little seed-leaves burst forth from their shells. They pushed up through the moist black earth. How they longed to get up into the light!

Indeed, they pushed so fast, that when at last the sun looked down upon the earth again, there they were, ready to say, "Good-morning, dear Sun, see how fast you have made us grow!"

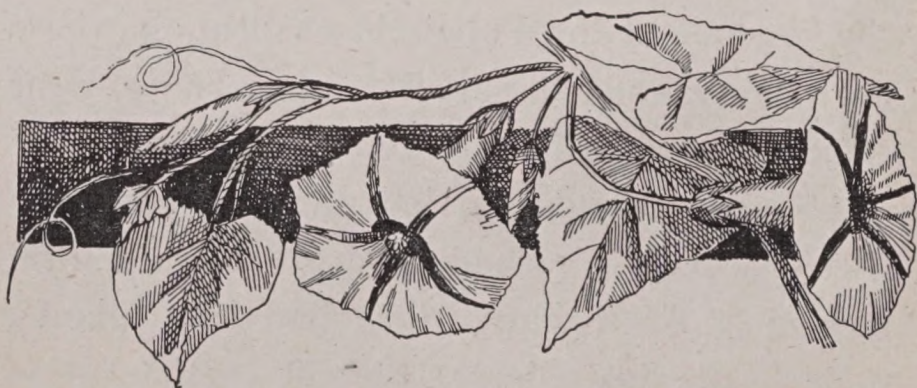
Then the clouds hurried away, and left the good-natured Sun smiling down upon a little garden full of tiny Morning-Glory plants, their heads just above the soft earth,

"We thank you so much, dear Sun," said they. "We shall try to reach the trellis very soon, and then we will make some beautiful flowers. And every morning when you rise in the east, they shall unfold their pretty trumpets to hear your good morning to them."

The old Sun smiled. He liked to hear the little Morning-Glory plants say this; and each day he poured his soft warmth down upon them to make them grow.

By and by some little trumpet-shaped flowers *did* appear. They were only buds at first—pale, white, little things, till one day the Sun bent down and whispered, "Welcome little flowers."

Then he kissed them; and, behold, they were changed to the richest colors—red and purple, pink and blue.





LADY BUG'S LAWN PARTY.

Little Lady Bug gave a party. All the bugs were invited. They came from all parts of the world, and there were hundreds of them.

Now Lady Bug lived on the edge of a great swamp, and across this all her guests must fly if they would reach the beautiful lawn upon which the party was to be given.

"Dear Will-o'-the-Wisp," said she, "please light your lamp to-night. The swamp is so dark that without you, some of my guests might lose their way."

The Will-o'-the-Wisp, always glad to help little Lady Bug, made himself as bright as ever

he could, and danced out across the swamp to meet the guests.

But, alas, the guests had never seen a Will-o'-the-Wisp. They were frightened. Some flew up into the very highest trees and only peeped out from behind the leaves. Others turned and flew home again—never stopping to take breath until they were miles away.

"What is that dreadful flame?" whispered June Bug; "it will scorch our wings."

"Then we shall have to fly around the swamp," said the Stag-Beetle, "for we dare not cross it with this strange creature dancing about in it!"

"O but we are so tired!" sighed the little bugs. "And then, too, we might lose our way, if we fly out of a straight line."

"Then let us choose the Dragon-Fly for a guide. He knows all about this region. Indeed, he tells me he was born here," said the Stag-Beetle.

And so with the Dragon-Fly leading the way, the big bugs started forth around the swamp.

"O dear! O dear! we shall lose our party after all!" wept the little bugs who were left behind.

But among these little bugs were some homely, quiet, little ones of whom no one had taken any notice.

"We are going out to see what this thing is," said they. And spreading their wings, off they flew straight at the Will-o'-the-Wisp.

Now Will-o'-the-Wisp had been enjoying the fright of the bugs; but when he saw these little gray bugs — hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of them — flying straight at him, it was his turn to be frightened.

Away he flew, the bugs close upon him. On the edge of the swamp, they overtook him. Such a battle as followed!

Will-o'-the-Wisp tried to burn the little troop; but strange to say his flame seemed not to harm them in the least.

"They have caught him! They have caught him!" buzzed all the little bugs that were hidden away behind the leaves and among the grasses.

"Let us go now and have our part in the victory!"

"Never!" cried the little gray bugs, when they saw them all flying so bravely across the swamp. "You do not deserve a part in our victory!"

So what do you think they did? Quick as a flash each little gray bug seized a bit of the Will-o'the-Wisp and tucked it under his wings. And when the other bugs reached the place, not a sign of a Will-o'the-Wisp was to be seen!

They all reached Lady Bug's home in time—big bugs, little bugs and all. They were all very tired, and were glad indeed to spend the whole next day sleeping and resting. By and by evening came again.

"Now let us dress in our very best colors," said they all, "and prepare for Lady Bug's party."

How beautiful they all were? Dragon-Fly's laces were wonderful! Gold Bug's wings were gorgeous. And there were dresses of shining green, and others of heaven's own blue.

"You poor little gray bugs," sneered Gold Bug. "How dusty you look? I wish I had given you some of the gold paint, and had showed you how to use the dew drops for mirrors!"

"Do not trouble yourself," answered the little gray bugs. And, at a signal from their leader, they all lifted their little gray wings and flashed forth their jewels of fire.

"Fire-flies! Fire-flies!" cried Lady Bug. "You shall be the heroes of the festival! You are beautiful! You shall light the lawn! And when my guests return to their homes you shall have the honor of being my chosen guides to help them across the swamp and through all the dark places."





THE TREE-TOAD AND THE GRAPES.

A little tree-toad had clambered up into a grape-vine. His home was in a tree near by; but he was very fond of visiting the grape-vines.

The grapes and he were the best of friends. They would sit and talk together by the hour.

One day the tree-toad had a very narrow escape from a great cat that had been driven by the dog, up into the tree where the toad lived.

As soon as ever the cat was gone, Master

Toad hopped over to the grape-vine to tell his friends about his adventure. Squatting himself in the very middle of a big grape leaf he began boasting how he had frightened the cat away.

The grapes cuddled close up to each other and began to laugh at the tiny toad. It is never any use to boast. People are sure to laugh at you if you do.

Just as Master Toad was in the most exciting part of his story, up crept a sly little breeze, lifted the leaf the toad was squatted upon, and over he went, backwards, head over heels, down to the ground below. How the grapes laughed!

They laughed till they grew purple in the face; and one of the very purplest of them all laughed so hard, that she shook herself fairly off the stem and went tumbling down the trellis to the ground just as the humbled little toad hopped around the corner out of sight.



THE APPLE BLOSSOMS.

"We are much handsomer than you are," said the little apple blossoms to the tiny pears on a tree near by. "Just see what pink and white wings we have. Your wings are *never* so pretty as ours. They are only white; still we wonder that you throw them down there on the grass even if there was no pink in them."

"Don't be silly," answered the tiny pears. "You will throw away *your* wings very soon, and the little green apples that will be left won't look so very different from us."

"Throw away our wings! Never!" cried the apple blossoms, their pretty pink cheeks growing redder and redder.

"Very well. We won't quarrel over it," said the tiny pears. "But we think you are very silly."

"And we think *you* are very silly!" answered the apple blossoms.

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The days went by. The little pink blossoms on the apple tree began to fade. Their pretty pink cheeks lost their color.

"What has happened to our beautiful wings," moaned the tiny apples, "O dear! O dear!" "It is time to shake off those faded apple blossoms," said the spring wind. Blow! blow! and down came a pretty shower of white petals upon the grass below. For a minute the tiny apples looked at each other half afraid.

"Never mind," said they at last, "those wings were growing as pale and white as the pear blossoms. We do not want them. Let's grow now as fast as ever we can and change into beautiful red apples." The tiny pears on the next tree hid their eyes and laughed to themselves. They laughed till the whole tree shook with their laughter.

"We told you so," they cried. But the tiny apples were so busy growing that they did not even hear what the little pears said to them.



RUTH AND THE PINE TREE.

"You are a fine, tall tree; you make pleasant shade on hot days, and in winter you are green and pleasant to look at. But what a pity your leaves are not large and beautiful, like the oak leaves! You have only sharp needles instead of pretty leaves."

What the pine tree said.

"Do you think I could take care of great broad leaves in the winter? No, indeed! Look at the poor, faded, torn oak leaves, The wind laughs at them, and likes to tear them to pieces, while my brave little needles can take care of themselves, no matter how it storms. And as for beauty! Look through my branches to the blue sky, or watch them when the snow clings to them, and tell me if I haven't the prettiest leaves in the world!"

And Ruth changed her mind, and decided that the pine needles were very good leaves, after all.

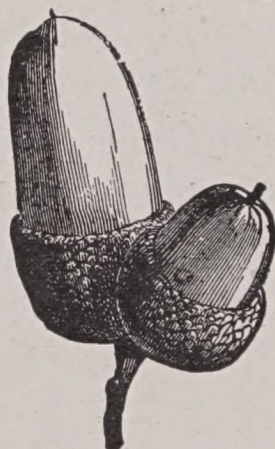
THE BLUSH ROSE.

There is a rose called the Blush rose. Do you know how it came to have that name?

One morning, very early, when only the fairies were up and about, a little rose bud stretched itself in its covering and peeped out.

"Dear me!" said the little bud, "how that great, round sun stares at me!" "That is because you are so beautiful," smiled the sun.

Then the little rose bud blushed a rosy pink; and some way that pretty blush never again left the little rose. Do you see, now, why the rose is called the Blush rose?



AN OCTOBER TALK.

One pleasant day in October an acorn and a chestnut were lying side by side on the brown earth where they had fallen. "I hope I shall be safe in the ground before winter comes," said the acorn, "for I expect to become a great oak some time, and oaks, as you know, are the kings of the forest."

"Yes, I hope so, too," said the chestnut, "I want to be safe before winter comes. I would like to grow into a tree."

"Oh, chestnut trees are not much," said the acorn. "No one cares anything about them except the boys. For my part, if I were a tree, I shouldn't care to live just to please a few children."

"Well," said the chestnut, "every tree to its taste. Some trees would rather have their food liked by boys and girls than have it to be fit for nothing but pigs."

"What?" said the acorn, growing angry. "The oak is the noblest of all the trees. I heard a man say one day, 'Great oaks from little acorns grow;' what a noble tree may be expected from such an acorn as I am! Ah, how glad I am that I'm an acorn and not a chestnut!"

Just then a squirrel, who had been peeping at them from her nest in the hollow of a tree, jumped down and seized the chestnut in her little gray paws.

"Good-by," sneered the acorn, as she carried it away. "That's the last of *you*. But there

is no great loss. Chestnuts are good enough for squirrels."

But, when the squirrel had put the chestnut away in her nice little house, she sprang down again, seized the acorn and carried it up, too.

"Halloo!" said the chestnut, "here we are together again. There is little hope now that either of us will ever become a tree." But the acorn said nothing.



BABY MAY.

Once there was a baby May Flower, that came out on the mother stem in the autumn, so as to be all ready for spring. She had some

very warm clothes to wear through the winter, though perhaps you would call them only husks and scales. But Baby May thought they were fine and warm, I can tell you.

She wanted to see the world, so she raised her little head.

"O mother," she said; "what are these tall straight things? They touch the blue above us."

"The tall trees are our friends," said her mother, "but I do not think they touch the sky. I have heard that is far away."

One day the May Flower saw the autumn leaves whirling through the air. She hid her face on her mother's shoulder, and asked, "Will the sky fall, too?"

"No," said her mother, "the leaves fall every autumn, but I have never seen the sky fall."

By and by the leaves had all fallen, and they lay thick over the heads of Mrs. May Flower and May.

"I don't like this," said May, "I want to see the sky." She worked and worked to get her head above the leaves, but she could not.

"O Woodchuck!" she cried; "please take these leaves away, so I can breathe."

But the woodchuck was fast asleep.

O Squirrel!" called Baby May; "please uncover my face so I can see the sky."

So the red squirrel came and danced about through the leaves, and uncovered the May Flower.

One night it grew bitterly cold. The water froze in the brook, and poor May nearly froze, too. She drew close to her mother, crying with cold.

"I wish the snow would come," said her mother.

The next morning when Baby May waked, she found a white blanket over her, soft as a feather, but oh, so cold!

"What is this?" she whispered shivering.

"This is the good snow to keep us warm," answered her mother. "It will keep off the cold wind, and keep us warm and well all winter. Go to sleep, now. I will wake you in time for spring."

And Baby May nestled closer, and went fast asleep.



THE FIR TREE.

Long ago a Fir seed flew on its little brown wing, far from the mother tree, to a pleasant field. From the seed came a tiny plant, which grew year by year to a stately tree. One April morning the Red Maple growing by the brook, spoke:

“Neighbor Fir Tree, look at my gay branches. See how my scarlet blossoms brighten the field, and float merrily down the brook. Your flowers are late; and when they do come, they are bunchy homely things, good only to scatter a cloud of yellow dust. I do not wait even for my own green leaves. I am the boldest, gayest of all the trees. Who would be a dark Fir Tree?”

In the spring the Apple Tree was too happy

to talk. She just covered herself with pink and white blossoms, and now and then sent a stray petal over to visit the Fir Tree, fearing he might be lonely, he looked so dull and quiet. But when autumn came, and her arms were full of red-cheeked apples, she called to the Fir Tree:

"How dreadful it must be to live so much alone! Little children love me. In the spring they come for my flowers. Long summer hours they climb in my branches, and now they like me best of all."

The tree dropped a ripe apple to a little boy who was passing, and called once more to the Fir Tree, "What a pity you can't make people happy!"

Tom's father came in the spring-time and bored a hole in the Sugar Maple, and put a dish down to catch the sap. As Tom stood under the tree, he heard a queer gurgling sound. This is what he thought he heard:

"It is sweet to be a Sugar Maple. My mouth is full of maple sugar, day and night. I'm glad my sap isn't so thick and bitter as Neighbor Fir Tree's. Ugh! It makes me shiver to think of it."

Once more Tom heard the Sugar Maple. It was in the autumn after she had put on her red and gold dress, and she was calling to the Fir Tree.

"O Neighbor Fir Tree! Don't you know it is October? Haven't you any new clothes for the bright harvest time? Do at least wake and show the world you are alive."

The Fir Tree was getting a bit tired of all this. So he opened a cone, and sent a sharp shower of seeds toward Mistress Maple to let her know he was alive; but he said never a word.

It was cold December, and the snow was deep. Tom's father had been cutting fir trees, and piling them on his ox-sled.

Suddenly Tom said: "I know where there's a beauty, taller than any of these. It's in the sugar maple field, down by the brook."

"Sure enough," said his father, "we'll have it."

The Fir Tree had been having the best of it lately. His neighbors had lost their dresses, and shivered in every wind. But he was as warm as you please in his thick green suit, and

strangely happy. "Winter is my time," said he; "I am a winter tree."

When he saw the axe, his heart gave a bound. "It isn't the Apple Tree they want," he said to himself.

He knew just as well what was coming as you and I do. He knew that he was going on the cars to the great city, to be bought and set up in a hall.

And so the Fir Tree at last bore beautiful fruit of candles and dolls and drums and candy and oranges; and so he made two hundred children happy.

THE VIOLETS' PARTY.

It was the last of May. Little Violet said to herself: "Here it is, late in the spring, and I have been planning for several days to have my party, and I shall invite only my relations.

Let me name them and see how many it will make.

Of course, *I* am Violet Blue — but I must name myself last.

First, there is Violet White; she is so cunning and pretty. Then Violet Yellow; she is rather odd. But I think she will come.

Then my two cousins from the meadow must come, they are so tall and graceful, and their names are just like the first two I have named, myself, Violet Blue, and Violet White.

I must not forget my pretty cousin on the hill, Violet Horse-shoe; she has a queer name, but she is very pretty.

Then my English cousin must come from her garden; dear little English Violet. She is always so sweet.

They say *she* has a sister, Violet White, but I have never seen her, and so I shall not invite her, I think. That makes all — how many shall I have now at my party?



DANDELION'S STORY.



I am a little, yellow dandelion. In the springtime, my leaves begin to grow, and just when they get long and pretty, some little boy comes with his knife and

basket, and digs me up, takes me off, and tells his mamma he has found a dandelion for her to eat.

Just think of it!

Sometimes I stay in the ground until my yellow blossom comes, and then they do not want to dig me, for I am not good to eat then.

Little girls like to pick my blossom and make curls out of my stem. So you see I am a very useful little plant.

THE DINNER PARTY.



"I must hurry and get my dinner ready," said the Lilac; "for if I am late, my friends, the bees, will have to wait."

So she set out her beautiful purple plates and her lavender goblets filled with honey.

"Dinner is ready!" cried the wind; and away it ran to tell the bees.

How they hummed and buzzed! "Was there ever such a feast?" they said. "The first we have had in this garden this spring! To-morrow we

will come again to make our *dinner calls*."

And indeed these bees were politely bred; for they made their "dinner calls" the next day, and the next, and the next,—and every day until the hospitable Lilac closed her house *for the season*.



THE TREE THAT TRIED TO GROW.

One time there was a seed who wished to be a tree. It was fifty years ago, and more than fifty — a hundred perhaps.

But there were great bare rocks where this little seed fell. Little by little, dust from a squirrel's paw, as he sat upon the rock eating a nut,—fallen leaves, crumbling and rotten—and perhaps the decayed shell of a nut,—made earth enough in the hollows of the rock for some mosses to grow; and for the tough little saxifrage flowers which seem to thrive on the poorest fare, and look all the healthier.

Then one by one, the mosses and blossoms withered, and turned to dust; until after years and years, there was earth enough to make a bed for a little feathery birch seed which came flying along one day.

The sun shone softly through the forest trees; the summer rain pattered through the leaves upon it; and the seed felt wide awake and full of life. So it sent a pale-green stem up into the air, and a little white root down into the shallow bed of the earth. But you would have been surprised to see how much the root found to feed upon in only a handful of earth.

Yes, indeed! And it sucked and sucked away with its little hungry mouths, till the pale-green stem became a small brown tree, and the roots grew tough and hard.

So, after a great many years, there stood a tall tree as big round as your body, growing right upon a large rock, with its big roots striking into the ground on all sides of the rock like a queer sort of wooden cage.

Wasn't this a brave little tree?



RUNAWAY PANSIES.

Dick, Beauty, and Dimple, were three little pansies. "I say," whispered Dick one day, "let's run away to the pleasant hill up yonder; I am tired of staying here." "Agreed," said the others.

"I'll take an umbrella," said Beauty, "the sun may be too hot for us." "Wait till I get my doll;" said Dimple.

They were ready at last and away they skipped over the grassy lawn.

"Isn't it nice?" said Dimple. "Capital," said Beauty using his big umbrella for a cane, and forgetting the hot sun.

"O! here is a little pool," said Dick who led the way.

What fun it was to stand close down to the rim of the cool water and peep in at their faces.

Just as they were thinking of taking a drink, a terrible form came fluttering over their heads.

"A brownie on a dreadful horse!" wailed Dick, darting ahead and falling in his haste.

Beauty tried to run away too, lost his umbrella and finally fell flat; while poor Dimple tipped head foremost into the pool.

What was worse they could not pick themselves up again, not even when the terrible brownie had passed out of sight, for the hot sun and the fright had made them very weak.

What would have become of them had Nellie not happened along just then?

"Why, you poor little things!" she cried, "how came you here?" But the pansies could only droop their heads for answer.

"I wish," thought Dick, "I wish she would take us somewhere away from this hot sun."

And sure enough, Nellie put the three runaways into fresh water and set them in a cool nook in the parlor.



THE FERN VILLAGE.

Ned, May and Lily were three children who lived near each other, and near a beautiful wood. There were a great many ferns in this wood, beautiful green, feathery ferns that the children never grew tired of gathering and carrying home. But they wilted so quickly that the children were always disappointed when they began to play with them.

One day when these ferns began to droop, Lily had a bright idea enter her little blond, curly head. "Why can't we go and play with them where they grow under the trees and

then we should not have to break their stems at all?"

"O!" said May, "they grow so thick together there is no room to make a play house."

"That won't make any difference," said Ned, straightening up to be as tall as he could, and talking just as if he were a grown up man. "*I* can clear away all the brush and pull up all the ferns you don't want." So they made a plan to go to the woods next day and play with the ferns just as they lived out in their woodsy home.

Next day was lovely and bright and the little folks could hardly wait till the dew had dried off the ferns so that they might begin the new "Fern Village" as they called it.

"We have come to live with you," May said to the ferns after they had found a pretty place to settle. "You die so quickly after we carry you away to our house that we are going to let you stay where you are." The ferns softly waved a welcome and the children began to unpack their load of house-keeping things.

Ned's little red wagon, "The Express," was

full. A little spade for digging, a hammer, some nails and bits of thin wood, the girls' tea sets and five dolls were in the first load, for Lilly was sure they would have to be another load. What a happy time they had in setting up house-keeping.

Ned was very glad of the girls' help before he had made a clearing large enough for the new settlement. They grew very hungry by this time and concluded to go home to dinner the first day, for the girls told Ned in a very wise way, that "nobody expects a regular dinner the first day they move."

It was great fun in the afternoon to "make believe" with the ferns. Away back of their new village was a great clump of large, dark, very dark ferns.

"That is the Black Forest" they said, "and we will tell stories about the elves and fairies that live there, some time when we are not so busy." (Their mother had read them stories about the Black Forest in Germany.)

At the further end of their village was one very tall fern with a thick bunch of smaller ones around it. "That is our church with the

tall steeple," May said, "and every one of these dolls must go to Sunday school, if Jane and Maria's shoes are all bursting out at the toes. She is so hard on shoes," said mamma May, sorrowfully.

Not far away from the church was another group of ferns, and this was the school-house. Another pretty bunch was a palm tree, (they had seen pictures of palm trees) which would look nice right in the middle of their front yard. Two small ferns that stood a little apart from the others, were chosen as just the place for the dolls' hammocks.

Just then, Ned came in fanning himself with a big fern, with another sticking jauntily in his hat-band. "*I think we need a driveway up to this village,*" he said, "and we ought to have tall trees each side of it. I am going to get some."

He returned soon with a handful of straight, tall, hardhack stalks all in blossom. They were very pretty and he planted them in two straight rows and they made a very grand entrance to "Fern Village."

By-and-by the dolls grew sleepy, and the

little mothers pulled some ferns to pieces and made beds on the soft pine needles with the separate little fernlets that make up the big ones. They kept the spiders and bugs away from the little beds by waving tall ferns back and forth over them. Even Ned whistled softly for fear of waking the doll-babies. Now wasn't this a lovely home?



WAKING TOO EARLY.

Once upon a time there was a little elm bud on a branch that grew close by a window. No other branch on the tree got quite so much

sun, or was so sheltered from winds and storms.

It had been very warm weather for winter. All the week the days had been bright and pleasant, and the air was mild and warm. The little elm bud had got it into its head that spring had come, and grew very impatient. He called to the other buds, but they were fast asleep.

"Is the whole world dreaming?" he said. "Am I the only one that knows that spring is here?"

Then he called with all his might to the other buds on the branch, and told them to make haste and get ready for spring.

"But where are the bluebirds?" they said. "Who ever heard of a spring without bluebirds? We don't believe a word of it." And they turned over and went to sleep again.

The next day was still warmer, and the restless little bud could bear it no longer. He called his brothers so loudly that sleeping was out of the question, and they said if spring was really come they would get ready for her.

So these seven foolish little buds, led by the foolish little bud that was so sure about it, loosened their warm brown coats, and started out into the world in their thin green dresses.

And the next morning there was a snow-storm!



WHY THE FLOWERS BLOOM ONLY HALF THE YEAR.

Mother Nature was very busy this autumn. The harvests had been rich, and there was more fruit than she could find people to give it to. The Sun-god and the Rain-god had been very kind, and all the earth was glad.

"Dear child," thought Mother Nature, looking out over the fields at the beautiful Flower-queen; "She never was so beautiful as she is this autumn. But I must hurry away to the cornfields and to the orchards.

"Good-bye, my dear child. Take care of yourself, and don't let the Frost-king carry you away?"

The little Flower-queen nodded her happy little head, and danced in the sunlight. "Do not be afraid, dear mother," she laughed, turning her sweet face up to the sky; "the cloud-lets will take care of me."

"But the little Flower-queen, like many another little child, did not know the danger in the world round about her; and so, when by and by a faint rumbling was heard away down under the earth, she only nodded her head all the more gaily.

"The earth children are afraid when they hear that noise," she said; "but I know it is only the rumbling of the wheels of Pluto's chariot."

Now Pluto was the king of the under world. He looked after the soil and saw that

it was kept rich and moist. But Mother Nature never dreamed that this old king envied her her beautiful little Flower-queen, and only waited his chance to come and steal her away.

"Mother Nature is very busy to-day," whispered the winds to the grim old king, as they swept by, close down to the earth. "And where is the little Flower-queen?" asked Pluto quickly.

"O she is at play in the fields and up and down the roadsides," answered the wind. A smile passed over Pluto's face; and in one moment he had leaped into his chariot.

It was the wheels of the chariot that the little Flower-queen heard. Suddenly there was a crackling and a tearing of the grass roots; and in another second, up came Pluto, chariot and all.

He could hardly bear the bright sunlight, it nearly blinded him; and, so, quickly seizing the little Flower-queen, he disappeared again down into the dark under world.

Poor Mother Nature! How she grieved when she came back and found her beautiful child gone! How dismal the whole earth

looked! Even the trees were dropping their leaves in grief!

For days and weeks the poor mother wandered up and down the cold, barren earth. "Come back, come back, my child," she moaned and the earth-children, hearing it, thought it was the wind.

The lakes drew a heavy veil over their faces and the waters forgot to sparkle. Even the little brooks and brooklets stood still to grieve.

But one day the Flower-queen came back again. Then Mother Nature rejoiced. The lakes smiled and again sparkled. The tiny brooks sang and danced for joy; and for six long months the Flower-queen played again in the sunshine.

But again one day she hung her pretty head and looked very sad. The bright colors of her dresses grew brown, and all the life seemed to fade out of her happy face.

"Dear mother," she whispered, "the time has come for me to go back to my home beneath the earth. You must not grieve for me. King Pluto is grim to be sure; but that is because he is lonesome down there all alone."

"He is very kind to me and, besides, I need the long rest. It will keep me from growing old; and every year I shall come back to you just as young and fresh as ever. So good bye, dear mother. Good bye, dear sunlight, good bye. Just a few moons, and I shall come back again."



THE WILLOW AND THE BEE.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Willow," said a bright little bee as he hummed through the air, one day quite late in the fall.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Bee," answered Mrs. Willow bowing most gracefully towards her kind neighbor, "How do you do this fine sunshiny afternoon?"

"And how are your brother bees; and how is your beautiful queen?"

"We are all very well, Mrs. Willow. Very well and very busy too," hummed the bee politely.

"I have noticed that you have been very busy lately," said Mrs. Willow. "But will you not come and sit upon one of my branches and rest?"

"You are very kind, Mrs. Willow; and I shall be very glad to rest a little.

"You see, the queen has been so determined we should get our cells all filled with honey, that we have had hardly time to breathe.

"But we have finished our work now. Every cell is full; and we have been given this one day to rest and play in. Our Queen said we might not have another chance to play for a long time.

"I didn't know what she meant, for I'm a new bee—I only came out of my egg last

spring—so I asked a drone what was going to happen.

“He told me that soon Jack Frost would come and bring the winter. Then we could not fly over the fields any more, but would have to stay in the hive till he went away, which would not be for a long, long time.

“O dear! I don’t like it at all. I wish I were a willow tree, so I shouldn’t have to be shut up.

“You have a pretty easy time, don’t you, Mrs. Willow, with nothing to do all summer but let your leaves dance in the breezes?”

“Nothing to do! indeed, Mr. Bee!” exclaimed the willow tree. “Do you think a mother with as many children as I have can be very lazy?”

“Children!” cried the bee; “I didn’t know you had any children!”

“That’s because you’re so young; but I have,—thousands of them all over this tree. There’s a baby now right under you.” The bee jumped.

“Under me! Why I don’t see anything.”

Then looking closer he added, “There’s

nothing here but a little, hard, brown lump. That doesn't seem much like a baby!"

"Perhaps not, Mr. Bee," replied Mamma Willow; "but if you could look inside, you'd find one fast asleep, wrapped in fur from head to toe.

"Every day this summer, when you thought me playing, I was busy getting these fur coats ready for my wee ones. They are so cosy and warm now, in their snug little cradles, that they'll sleep soundly until spring comes."

"Well, that's very strange, Mrs. Willow! I didn't know you had so much to do. And will the babies stay there all winter?"

"Yes, to be sure they will, and be as quiet as little mice. You shouldn't think that you bees are the only ones who sleep during the cold weather. I, too, must have rest, and now that the babies are taken care of, I'm ready to stop working.

"Why, how chilly it is! Don't you think so, Mr. Bee? Why, there's old Northwind! I wondered what made me so sleepy. Now that he's come, I shouldn't be one bit surprised if Jack Frost were here this very night! You'll

be wise to fly home before you get cold, my little neighbor!"

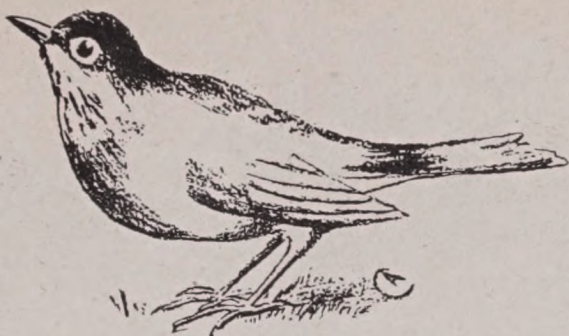
"Yes, I think I ought to go; I didn't know it was so late. Good night, Mrs Willow! Sweet dreams to you and the babies!"

"Good night, Mr. Bee! Don't forget to come and see us all in the spring!"

"I'll remember," answered the bee; and away he flew to his hive in the garden.

Mrs. Willow was right, for Jack Frost did arrive in a very short time, and the bee was very glad to curl himself up in his warm little hive.





THE ROBIN'S NEST.

"Where shall I build my nest?" said a robin one day in spring.

"Build it here, among my leaves, dear robin," answered the rose-bush. "I shall soon be thickly covered with leaves and with beautiful blossoms, so no one will see your nest."

"Ah, no, good rose-bush," the robin said, "I should not dare to trust my nest among your leaves and blossoms."

Then the apple-tree said, "Build your nest in my branches, pretty robin. I will rock your baby robins, and sing them to sleep with my rustling leaves."

The robin looked at the sturdy old apple-tree, and answered, "Yes, yes, kind tree. My little nest will be safe in your strong arms, I know." And in a few days the dainty home was made.



A JOKE.

Mr. Chipmunk found some acorns
In the wall: "Ho! ho! said he
I'll not tell my little wife;
She *does* eat so greedily."

So he took them from his pockets,
Hid them safely in the dark;
Then sat a moment, blinking,
On a bit of fallen bark.

Mr. Chipmunk came to dinner
Next day, without his wife;
Cried, "Now where *are* those acorns?
I can't think, to save my life!"

Then the little acorns laughed
Till they split their sides with glee;
"Ha! ha! *he'll* never find us,
We shall each become a tree."



A LITTLE GIRL POET.

There was once a beautiful little girl with great violet eyes, and soft, golden hair.

The violets had crept into her heart some way and had taught her to see strange, beautiful things.

I think the violets must have taught her the secrets and the language of flowers, too; for when she went out into the fields she saw many beautiful things that other little girls did not see.

Often she talked with the flowers. They understood what she said: for they always

nodded back to her and looked at her with such a bright smile.

The pine trees whispered together as she passed by!

She heard them; for she often put out her hand and touched them tenderly, knowing that they were saying kind words about her.

She understood the bird language too, and if you could have seen the birds listen, and have heard them twitter, you would have no doubt that the birds understood her language as well as she did theirs.

Even the ugly worms and caterpillars she was very careful not to harm, for she knew each one was a prince or princess in disguise.

The butterflies often told their secrets to her.

Sometimes people laughed at her when she called the butterflies little child angels; but she knew they laughed only because they could not understand and had not such beautiful eyes to look through as she had.

By-and-by when the little girl had become a woman, she wrote out all these beautiful stories of the bees and birds, the flowers, the trees, the caterpillars and the butterflies that she had learned, and put them into a book.

Then the people called her a poet; and everybody, old and young, were so glad to read these beautiful secrets that had been in her heart since she was a very, very little girl.

WHO PLANTED THE SUNFLOWER?

An old sunflower which had once reared its proud head in one corner of a garden was lamenting the idea that its life must soon end and that it would be soon forgotten. "It would not make me feel so bad," said the Sunflower, "if I could only leave something behind to remind the little children of me once in a while."

"O I will help you to do that," said the Wind, "just let me have a few of your seeds and I will see that they are planted for you."

"You are very kind indeed," replied the Sunflower, "just help yourself to them."

So the Wind blew on the Sunflower very gently until the seeds which were already loose in their little seed case, began to fall at the foot of the sunflower.

In the spring when it began to rain and the

ground was soft, these little seeds began to sink in the ground where they soon took root and began to grow.

The little school children wondered how a sunflower came to be planted in the yard; they asked their teacher if she had planted it and she said "No," then they asked the janitor, but he could not tell them. If you were asked could you have told?

FALLING LEAVES.

Once there was an Oak tree that held its scarlet leaves tight after most of the other leaves had faded or fallen. At last came a roaring wind that scattered the leaves far and wide.

"What fun!" cried a bright leaf as he flew by his neighbor.

"Now I am a bird!" he said, as he sailed along on the wind.

Then the wind lifted him up almost to the sky, and he shouted, "Now I am a star!"

So he danced and flew, held by the strong north wind, till he was out of breath.

"Let me make somebody happy," he whispered to the wind, "and I won't ask for anything more."

And the wind blew him gently in at a little sick girl's window, and laid him by her hand.

BOTH SIDES.

"Such fun to poke the turtle with a stick!" said Johnny.

"See him crawl! The awkward thing! What a funny head he has! I've played with him all day! I wonder why he keeps going towards the water. The land is much nicer to live on! Such a silly turtle."

"One thing I don't like," groaned a little turtle, "and that is a boy."

"Here is one that has poked me all day long with a stick. Does he think I never get tired? I've tried all day to get to the water. The water is so cool and nice."

"How foolish anyone is to live on the hot dry land! The boy is not looking at me now. I'll hurry to the water. Here I go. Good-bye, boy. I hope there will be no boy in the water."



LITTLE ACORN.

"I'm nothing but a little acorn,
Not much bigger than a bee;
But mama Oak-tree tells me that
I will grow as big as she.

"I can't see how — but she says some way
I will pop out from my shell,
A little sprout will greet the sunshine
Starting up and down, as well.

"I'll keep growing, bigger, higher,
Spreading out my branches wide;
And will never stop to wonder
Till I stand up by her side."



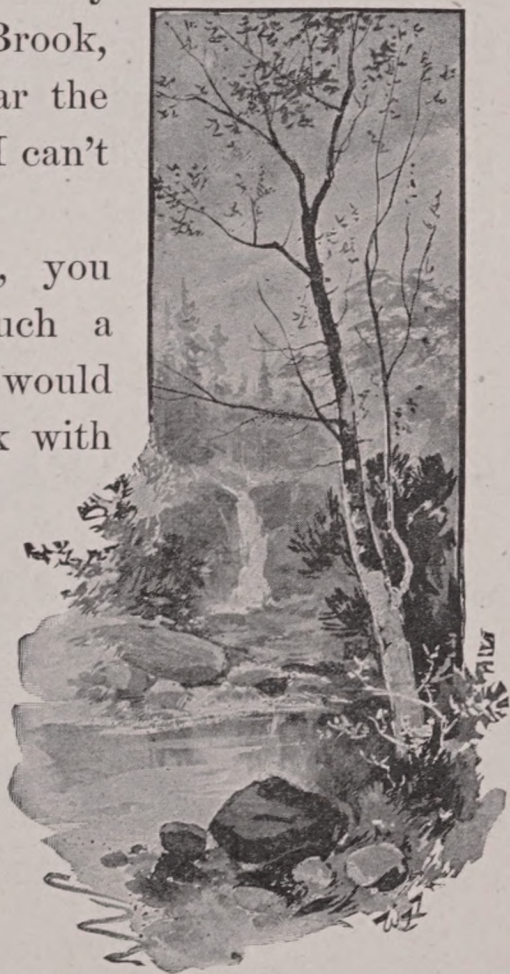
THE BUSY WORLD.

"Stay and play with me, Mr Brook," said a little girl, as the brook went hurrying by.

"I thank you very much," said the Brook, "but don't you hear the river calling me? I can't stop."

"Miss Butterfly, you needn't be in such a hurry; I wish you would play hide and seek with me."

And the butterfly said, "If I expected to live to be a hundred years old, I would. But as I'm only a butterfly, I've plenty to do, and a short time to do it in. Good morning!" And away she went, out of sight.



"After all, I would rather play with a squirrel. Come Chippy, come and play with me."

"You are very good, but I am getting nuts ready for Thanksgiving pies," said Mrs. Squirrel, "so please excuse me."

Then because she could not find anybody to play with her, the little girl did her mother's errand. Wasn't she a queer little girl to do errands?



SNOWDROP.

I'm a little snowdrop,
As pure as pure can be ;
I come with bright eyed Daisy,
The Queen of May to see.



GOLDEN ROD AND ASTER.

Long, long ago there lived high up on a hill an old witch. She was bent and crooked and very cross. But she had the magic power of changing people into whatever form she pleased.

It seemed a pity she was so cross. One would have thought, living up there with the blue sky above her and the birds and flowers about her, that she, too, would have grown sweet and lovely.

But it was only the cold gray sky she ever noticed. The wind she never heard unless it howled.

She never gave thought to any bird except the thieving crow; nor to the flowers until they began to fade. The sun was always too hot; and the moon kept her awake at night. Poor cross old witch!

But little Golden Hair and little Bright Eyes did not know how cross the old witch was. And when they were told that she could give people what they wished, the two children longed to go up the hill to find her.

One sunny morning they set forth. Up, up they went, following the tiny brook, stopping now and then to play upon its banks.

They gathered flowers and mosses; they floated them along the stream and called them ships; they drank from the acorn cups; they made crowns and wreaths to place upon each other's heads.

The air was soft and warm. There was a yellow haze over the fields. The crickets chirped lazily; and even the locusts and grasshoppers were drowsy.

"But are you not afraid?" asked Bright Eyes looking up at Golden Hair. "Afraid, dear little sister? O no! Surely the good

woman will not harm us when she knows why we came."

And so the children trudged on up the hill. They sang glad songs that made the squirrels come out from their holes to listen. And the birds wondered what new voice had been added to their own bright chorus.

But the old witch was not in the best mood this glorious September day; for her spinning flax was nearly all gone and she knew it would be a long time before she could gather more.

She sat scowling at the sky until the little clouds, frightened, scurried away as fast as ever they could; and the little hare bells at her feet hung their heads for sorrow.

Now and then the laughter of the children reached her ear. "What sound is that?" she snarled; for, poor old woman, she had lived alone so long, she had learned to hate the sound of people's voices.

By and by the children reached the hill-top and sat down upon a stone to rest. Over them hung a tree of russet apples, ripe and golden.

"Here! here!" cried the old woman. "Who

are you? And have you come to steal my apples? Away with you!"

"O no, good woman," said Golden Hair; "we have come to see you, and ask a favor of you, please."

"A favor?" growled the old witch. "What is it you want?"

"We have been told you can give us what we wish or change us into what we wish."

"Well what if I can!" snarled the cross old witch again."

"We want you to give us that which will make other people happy," said little Bright Eyes.

"Nonsense!" sneered the witch.

"Don't you like to make people happy?" asked Golden Hair grieved and hurt.

"I? no," sneered the old witch again.

"We are sorry if we have made you angry," said Bright Eyes. "We will go back down into the valley at once."

Now this happened hundreds of years ago; and those who saw the children go up the hill could not remember that they ever came down again.

But from that time on there was a new glory upon the hillsides—tall graceful golden flowers, and bright-eyed purple flowers.

How the people loved these flowers! They called them Golden Rod and Asters. Were the children changed by the old witch's magic wand into these flowers so like themselves? Perhaps they were—who knows?

A YELLOW BOUQUET.

Dainty little dandelion,
Smiling on the lawn,
Sleeping through the dreary night,
Waking with the dawn.

Pretty little dandelion,
Sleeping in the glen.

When another year returns,
You will come again.

O, pretty little golden-rod
I'm glad you've come to town!
I saw you standing by the gate,
All in your yellow gown.

No one was with me, and I thought
You might be lonely, too,
And so I took my card case,
And came to visit you.

You're fond of company, I know,
You smile so at the sun,
And when the winds go romping past,
You bow to every one.
How you should ever know them all,
I'm sure I cannot tell;
And when I come again, I hope,
You'll know me just as well.

— *Bronson.*

LOMBARDY POPLARS.

Do you know how oddly the boughs of the Lombardy Poplar grow? Straight up in the air: making the tree look, as some one has said, for all the world like an umbrella turned inside out by the gale.

Of course in the Legend world there must be a reason for this. Here it is.

Some one had stolen the pot of gold which is said to be at the end of the rainbow.

The wind messengers were sent to search for it. The Elm, the Oak, the Pine, all the trees had been asked if they knew the thief. All pointed their leaves toward the Poplar saying, "The Poplar knows! the Poplar knows!"

"I know?" said the Poplar, raising its branches in pretended surprise. "Why how should I know!"

But just then the pot of gold was seen shining through the leaves. The Wind messengers at once seized upon the gold, and as a punishment the Poplar was doomed to forever hold its arms in just that position, for a warning to all other trees to be honest.

MOTHER EARTH'S FIRST CHILD.

It was early in March,—and still the snow lay in patches over the patient bosom of Mother Earth.

"Tired of waiting?" said a frisky breeze as

he nipped the noses of two foolish buds that had dared open their waterproof-coats a little way.

"Did you speak to me or to those poor things you are abusing?" asked Mother Earth.

"To *you*, my dear madam," replied March Wind politely. "You don't suppose I would waste my time on those silly babies."

"Well then, March Wind, I *am* tired of waiting. I am so lonely without my dear children.

"Think of all the thousands of grass-blades, dead, under this cruel snow!

"Think of the sweet flowers that have fallen to rise no more! Yes, I know that others will come, but the waiting is so long."

"Cheer up! before you know it, all your housekeeping cares will be back on you again. Now I must away! If a rash blue-bird has ventured north, I want to find him and tweak his nose—his bill I mean— Good-by" and March Wind rushed off with a whoop and a hallo.

"I must wait, I suppose," and Mother Earth settled back into her old patience.

Ting-a-ling!

"What is that?" cried Mother Earth, "am I dreaming?" Ting-a-ling!

"Why, little Snowdrop, my baby darling, are you indeed here?"

Yes, little Snowdrop had arisen from her loving, patient heart. There she stood, a delicate, tender creature—a bell of purest white swaying on its pale, green stem.

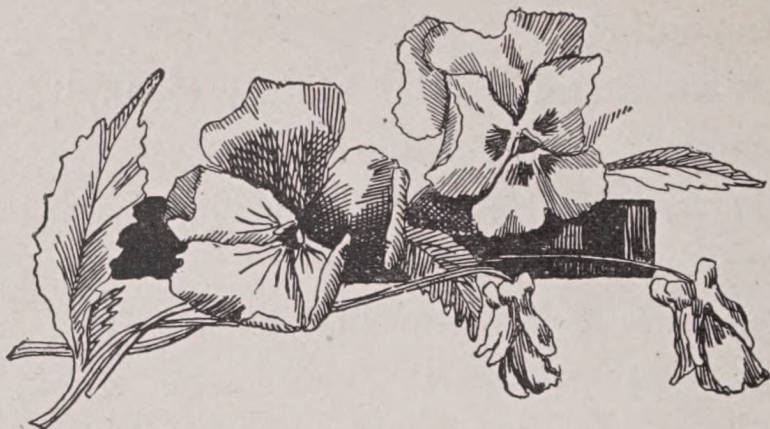
"Darling! I am so happy. I was indeed lonely with all my children gone. But were you not afraid to rise in the cold and snow?"

"No, mother dear," replied the little Snowdrop, "I wanted you so much I could not help growing. How happy I am to see you smile. You are such a great mother and I am so pale and tiny! How can you care for me?"

"Why, you are my first child! No one is quite so dear as my little Snowdrop," said Mother Earth.

March winds might blow cold, the snow might lie heavily and the bluebirds be still far away. But Mother Earth was happy, her first baby on her loving bosom.

—K. L. B.



PANSY PLAYMATES.

Baby in her shade hat,
Going out to walk;
Stops beside the pansy bed,
For a little talk.

She believes the pansies
Know as much as you,
With their little velvet lips,
And their eyes so blue.

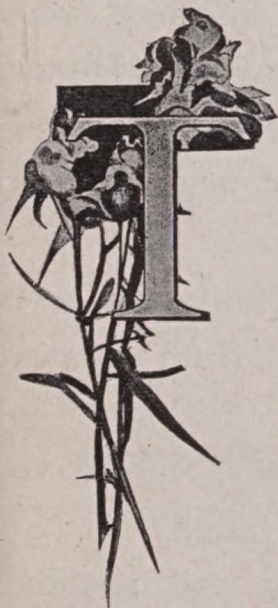
So she tells them stories,
Stooping by their beds;
How she loves them every one,
Purple, yellow, red.

Tells them how the big dog
Takes her on his back;

How the ducks have frightened her,
With their loud "Quack! Quack!"

And she knows they hear her,
Nodding at her knees;
Else what makes them bow their heads?
Could it be the breeze?

— *Home and School Visitor.*



THE OAK LEAVES.

HERE was once a wicked old dwarf who said to a little child, "I shall carry you off to dwell with me in my cave in the mountain one of these days."

"O please, please, please don't!" begged the child.

"Very well," laughed the dwarf; "I will not carry you away just yet. But by and

by — when the oak leaves fall — then you shall go."

Now there were some tiny oak trees near by, beside which the little girl used to

play. And one day when they looked tired and wilted she brought some water and poured upon their roots.

How grateful they were that hot dry day. And they had not forgotten it.

"We will help this little girl who was so good to us," they said. So they called to the big oak trees, and told them what the cruel dwarf had said.

"Very well," answered the big oak trees, "then we will never shed our leaves. Henceforth there shall never be a time in all the year when there are not leaves in plenty upon our branches."

By and by autumn came. The leaves were falling, and the dwarf crept out from his cave to steal away the little girl."

"No, no," rustled the oak trees. "Do you not see our leaves have not yet fallen?"

The cruel old dwarf scowled and scolded; but the leaves only danced and rustled all the more — and there was nothing for him to do but to run back to his dark cavern.

So you see why it is the Oak branches are never leafless all the winter long.



THE BOY AND THE SPARROW.

Once a sweet little boy sat and swung on a
limb,

On the ground stood a sparrow-bird looking
at him,

Now, the boy he was good, but the sparrow
was bad;

So it threw a big stone at the head of the lad,
And it killed the poor boy, and the sparrow
was glad.

Then the little boy's mother flew over the
trees,

"Tell me," where is my little boy, sparrow-
bird, please?"

"He is safe in my pocket," the sparrow-bird
said,

And another stone threw at the fond mother's
head,

And she fell at the feet of the wicked bird
dead.

You imagine, no doubt, that the tale I have
mixed,

But it wasn't by me that the story was fixed,
'Twas the dream a boy had after killing a
bird.

And he dreamed it so loud that I heard every
word.

And I jotted it down as it really occurred.

SONG OF THE GRASS BLADES.

Peeping, peeping here and there,
In lawns and meadows everywhere
Coming up to find the spring,
And hear the robin red-breast sing.
Creeping under children's feet,
Glancing at the violet sweet,
Growing into tiny bowers,
For the dainty meadow flowers.
We are small, but think a minute
Of a world with no grass in it?



THE PINE TREE.

It was such a pitchy pine! Uncle Nat had sent it in from the farm to be burned in Brother Lewis's city fireplace.

One evening Fred lay upon the rug before the fire, watching the sparks and listening to the snapping and the singing of the pine.

"I am glad you like our song," said the big pine knot to the little boy. "For when we

were first loaded into the freight car, and knew we were to come to the city, I must confess we were pretty sorrowful. For you see we are such free, happy trees there in the big open country.

"And then, if we grow big and tall, we are cut down and piled so nicely in front of good Uncle Lewis' door.

"The children carry us by the basketful into the house, and put us into the big fireplace there.

"They bake apples, and pop corn, and make molasses candy by the beautiful red and yellow blaze we make.

"After we have baked their apples and popped their corn and made their candy, the children sit down before our fire and tell stories, and we crackle and snap to show how pleased we are to hear them."

"But don't you hate to be burned down to nothing but dead gray ashes?" asked the elegant andirons who thought that anything that could not shine must be worse than useless.

"*Dead* ashes!" crackled the pine knot. "Do

you think we are dead and done with life when we are ashes? Bless your shining faces, not a bit! But you have never lived out in the country, have you; and you do not know about the soil?" —

But just then the knot fell, its bright flame flickered out, and it could say no more.

"What did it mean?" asked the andirons of each other.

"I know!" said Lewis, and he woke himself with the sound of his own voice.

ALL YELLOW.

A dandelion sprang on the lawn,
All gayly dressed in yellow;
He nodded in the springing grass,
A jolly little fellow.

A yellow bird flew from the tree
He, too, was dressed in yellow.
"The saucy thing to steal my coat!
The thief, the wicked fellow!"

A golden sunbeam came that way,
And eyes each little fellow;
“Dear me, when one the fashion leads,
How common grows my yellow.”



PROCESSION OF FLOWERS.

Sing, sing, lily bells ring,
The blossoms are coming to town, —
Daisies and lilies and daffy-down-dillies,
Each in a sweet new gown.

Sing, sing, lily bells ring,
The blossoms are coming to town,
Lilacs and roses, and other sweet posies,
Each in a fresh new gown.

Sing, sing, lily bells ring,
The blossoms are coming to town,
Pansy and mignonnette, marigold, violet,
Each in a rich, new gown.



THE LITTLE MEN IN GREEN.

It was a very tiny country, with a wooden wall around it. There were no gates to the wall for nobody ever went out or in. It was situated in the bay window where the sunshine came in on fair days.

The country belongs to Prince Curly Hair. When he first discovered it there were no

people living in it, there was just the level ground of soft fine earth.

But day after day the warm sunshine fell across it, and the showers dropped softly down, and the blue spring sky looked in at the bay window. And one morning the little prince went to look at his country, and there were eight little men in green standing in a row.

They were very tiny men at first, in straight, green suits, but every day they grew a little taller. Prince Curly Hair once heard them whispering together. He had been so still they thought he must be asleep.

"We must grow fast," said the tallest one, stretching himself a little higher.

"My coat is getting so tight," sighed another.

"How warm the sunshine is!" breathed the tiniest one of all. "I am so glad I am alive."

"I heard a robin this morning," whispered another, bending to its mate, "I think spring is almost here."

Prince Curly Hair rubbed his eyes. Surely he was wide awake. But the little men in

green stopped whispering then, and stood up straight and stiff.

One morning when he went to look at them, he found that one of them had popped out a little green sword and held it stiff and brave at his side. He was the tallest and stood at the head of the row, so he was made captain.

After a while all the men had green swords, and many of them. They looked like lily leaves, but the prince knew they were swords.

Day after day the skies grew bluer and bluer, the trees set green leaves a-fluttering, and the birds chose mates and built nests, with all manner of soft merry chatter and musical outburst of gladness.

At last a strange, beautiful thing happened. It didn't happen suddenly, but slowly, day by day, each little man lifted higher and higher a sheaf of folded buds. And at last, one golden morning Prince Curly Head found them each holding aloft a cluster of blossoms, pink and purple and palest blue.

And the country was only a wooden box, and the eight little men in green were eight little hyacinths!



THE FIELD PEA'S STORY.

"The first thing that I can recollect is that the pea from which I sprang was threshed out of the pod with a great number of others, and that we were all put into a bag to be sent away for seed. There we remained for several

months in perfect darkness, wondering where we should find ourselves when we once more saw the light.

"One day the bag in which we were lying was put into a cart, and, after a journey lasting about an hour, was taken down again and untied. Then we found that we were in a large open field, and that a curious machine, drawn by a horse, was standing close by.

"What the use of this machine was we were very soon to find out; for we were quickly taken out of the bag, and put into a number of square boxes arranged in a row upon it. As soon as this was done the horse began to move along, dragging the machine after him; and then I found that the box in which I was lying had a funnel at the bottom, and that my companions were falling down it one after the other.

"'My turn will come next,' I thought; and very soon my footing gave way, and I fell into the horrible black funnel. Down, down I went in the darkness, until at last I found myself buried a couple of inches deep in the earth. Then I guessed that the machine in which I

had been put was a 'seed-drill' and that I was now sown into the ground.

"Only a short time after I was sown, I began to feel a strange, swelling sensation, as though I were about to burst. And soon, sure enough, I split partly in two, and discovered that I had changed my form, and was beginning to push upwards.

"A few days later I found myself actually above the ground; and then I saw that I was no longer a smooth round pea, but had become a pretty green plant, with two or three small, tender leaves. And very proud I was of my new appearance.

"When I looked round about me, I noticed numbers of my old friends, who had undergone just such a change as I had, and were now standing in long rows all about me. In every direction that I looked there they were, standing only about an inch or so apart from one another. And as far as I could see, there was nothing but row upon row of little green plants just like myself."

"Alas! my pride in my nice green leaves was soon to have a terrible fall. Only two or

three evenings afterwards, when the weather was a little warmer than usual, some dreadful little beetles came up out of the ground, and began to nibble my leaves away at the edges!

"Of course I could do nothing at all to prevent them; and when daylight came, and the beetle departed, I found that they had eaten nearly half of every one of my leaves. I felt so weak that it really seemed to me as if I could never recover my strength.

"On the following evening the beetles appeared again, and fed upon me all night as before. And when day dawned, there was nothing left of my beautiful leaves but just the rib down the middle.

"You may imagine how ill I felt, because a plant breathes by its leaves; and now I had lost my lungs, as it were, and was suffering very much from want of air. Indeed at first I believed that I could not possibly recover, but must very soon die. But, most fortunately, a nice warm shower of rain came on, and made me grow so rapidly that, when the ground was dry enough for the beetles to come out again, I had become so tall and strong that they could

not do me much harm. And after that I was scarcely troubled by them again.

"When six or seven weeks had rapidly passed away, I had nearly finished growing, and began to put out a number of pretty pink and purple flowers. So sweet did they smell, and so full of honey were they, that the bees came flocking to them in multitudes; and for some days the field presented a very busy scene indeed.

"But after a week or so, my pretty flowers began to fade and drop off, and I found that each one left a tiny pod behind it. And these



Pods, each of which was filled with a row of little peas, swelled and grew until they became as you see them now.

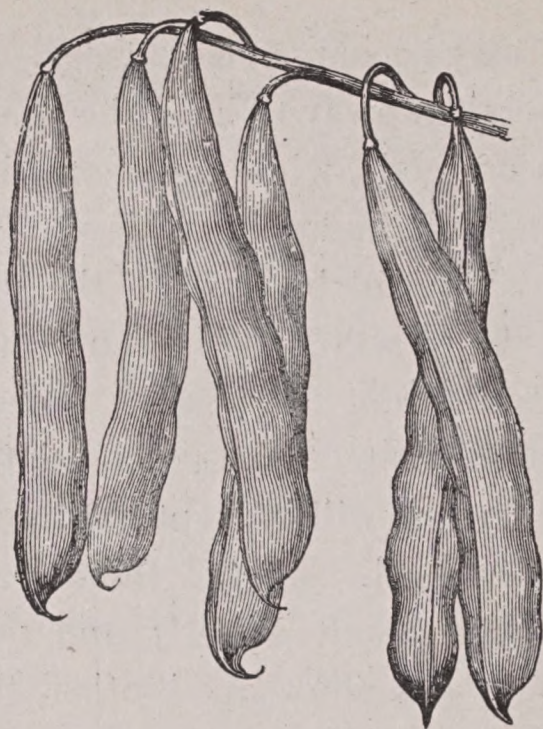
"What will happen to me next? The farmer will leave me where I am until I wither and die; and then he will send his men with sickles or scythes to cut me down. After that I shall be left lying upon the ground for a day or two,

so that I may become perfectly dry. And then I shall be taken away to have the peas threshed out from my pods, while my stem will be made up into a stack, and afterwards used as fodder.

“But what will become of the peas themselves? They will be used, no doubt, for all kinds of different purposes. Some may be ground down into flour and used for making soup; and some will be kept until next spring, and used as seed. That, I think is all that I can tell you about myself; and now I will stand aside and allow my brother, the garden pea, to tell you his story.”

THE LILY AND THE DAISY.

Down by the stream the lily blows,
In meadow green the daisy grows;
One bends its head with modest grace,
And one looks up with smiling face.
And both are part of heaven's care,
The daisy bright, the lily fair.



THE GARDEN PEA'S STORY.

"Like my friend of the field, the first thing that I can recollect is being shelled out of the pod and placed in company with a great number of others. Instead of being fastened up in a bag, however, we were enclosed in paper packets, each holding only about a pint of seed; for I heard the gardener say that we were very valuable peas, and must be sold in small quantities. And then we were put away on a shelf in a large warehouse.

"After I had remained there about three months, the packet in which I was lying was sold; and very shortly afterwards we found ourselves out in a large market-garden, where a nice piece of ground was prepared for us.

"The gardener opened a shallow trench across the piece of ground which he had made ready, and sowed us in a straight line all along it. Then he covered us in with earth and went away.

"In about ten days' time I managed to push my head above the ground, and found that a number of my companions were doing the same. As the gardener passed by he saw us, and bringing some powder, he scattered it all round us, and even upon our leaves.

"At first I could not think why he did this; but at night, as my brother of the field found, a great many little beetles came out of the ground and tried to eat me. But they did not seem to like the powder at all, and would not cross over it; so that although they were so near, they never touched me.

"Next day the gardener appeared again, and brought a lot of brushwood with him, which he

carefully laid down on either side of our row. This, I perceived, was to shelter us at night, and to keep the cold wind away; for we are much more delicate than the field peas, and very readily catch cold. Two weeks later he came again, and planted a row of tall sticks beside us. These, I found, were intended for us to climb, so that we might have some support as we grew taller. By the end of June we were nearly six feet high, and then we put out a number of blossoms, and were soon covered with pods.

“You do not see any pods on me now, for my peas are delicate only when they are green; and must never be allowed to ripen.”





LITTLE SWEET PEA.

Of all the flowers the summer brings,
Little Sweet Pea with unfolded wings,
And a delicate fragrance that from them
springs,
Is sweetest and best to me.

Her sober brown seeds in the ground I
place,
Then wait for the sight of her cheery face
And little tendrils with clinging grace,
A pleasant sight to see.

Little Sweet Pea is brave and bold:
Early she lifts her head from the mould;
And, though the winds are searching and
cold,
Never a fear has she.

Though April laughs and cries like a child,
And even May can be rude and wild,
She knows that June will be friendly and
mild,
So she toils on patiently.

Her neighbors all are at her command,
Glad to offer a helping hand;
"You are young," they whisper, "alone to
stand:
Lean upon me," "And me."

She clasps their fingers upon her way,
And so climbs upward, day by day,
Till June, with a steady, comforting ray,
Cheers the heart of Sweet Pea;

And makes it so glad and happy and light
That she breaks into blossoms fragrant
and bright,
Like rosy butterflies ready for flight,
A joy to all who see.

Constant and true is Sweet Pea, and
though
Early to come, she is late to go.
She stays till the clouds are heavy with
snow,
And all alone is she.

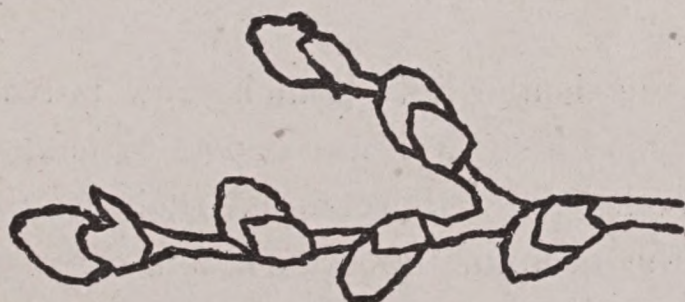
She shivers with cold in the autumn gale,
Her wings are turning purple and pale,
The strength departs from her fingers
frail;

"It is time to go," says she.

The loving friends that helped her to rise
Look in her face with sorrowful eyes.

"I will come back again," she cries;

"Good-bye," says little Sweet Pea.



A BROKEN BRANCH.

A boy passing down the street broke off a switch from a willow tree. After he had played with it as long as he cared to, he threw it as far as he could, into the field, by the river.

You can guess how sorry the willow branch felt, to be broken from the mother tree and left

there to die. By and by another boy came through the field, and picked the stick up and set it in the ground like a little straight tree. Then both boys went home and forgot all about the willow branch.

But the sun and rain remembered it, and whispered to it, and told it to grow.

"Can I, all alone, without the tree to help me?" said the little branch.

"O, yes, indeed," said the sun. "Just be brave and strong, and try with all your might."

So the slender little branch grew brave, and did try. First, there were roots to send down for food. After those found their way down into the ground, the branch felt very strong and proud.

"I am a tree already," she said to herself. "I can stand firm, and I can get my own living now. I will be big enough for the birds to build in, sometime."

The boys grew up to be men. One day they went rowing on the river together, and as the day was hot, they pushed their boat under a tree that grew on the bank, and rested in the

cool shade. It hung long drooping arms around them, and made their rest sweet. Though they could not understand, the tree was whispering to them,

"Don't you remember the willow branch?" she said.

WHERE DID THE WILLOW BUD COME FROM?

A little boy carried a stick to school. By and by his teacher thought she had better take care of it for him. So she laid it down in the school-room till school was done.

Then the boy wanted his stick again, and there on the side — what do you think? A white pussy willow bud was showing, that hadn't shown before.

"Where was it before? Where did it come from?" the teacher asked.

"It was there before," said the boy, "only it hadn't opened its coat."

And of course that was true. But who would think a warm room would make a pussy willow want to take off its coat, just like a boy or girl.



THE OLD OAK.

Farmer Breen was very thrifty. He never allowed a weed to grow by the roadside if he could help it. When a tree stopped bearing he cut it down.

Out in Farmer Jones' pasture stood an old oak. Farmer Jones' grandfather had planted it from a little acorn.

"Why don't you cut that old oak down? It

is half dead," said Farmer Breen to Farmer Jones one bright spring morning.

Farmer Jones looked up at the old tree. "It is rather old," he said; "but what would the birds do for nesting places if I should cut it down?"

"How foolish!" thought Farmer Breen.

Autumn came. "Why don't you cut that old, half-dead oak down?" said Farmer Breen again.

Farmer Jones looked up at the tree. "Yes, it is old," he said, "and it is half dead; but what would the squirrels do without that old oak?"

"How foolish!" said Farmer Breen again.

But Farmer Jones did not care. He and the birds and the squirrels understood each other, and that was enough.





THE PINE TREE ACADEMY.

All the birdies went to school,
In a pine tree, dark and cool,
At its foot a brook was flowing,
 The teacher was a crow
 And what he did not know,
You may be sure was not worth knowing.

Their satchels are hanging up tidy and neat,
They smooth down their feathers and wipe off
 their feet,
While the wind through the tree-tops goes
 creeping.

 "Speak up loud," says the crow,
 "I can't hear as you know
While the branches are swaying and creaking."

They are taught the very best way to fly,
To catch the insect that goes buzzing by,

How to cock the head when beginning to sing.

“I’ve a cold,” says the crow,

“Or else I would show

How the nightingale does when she makes the
woods ring.”

The books are made of maple leaves,

For paper, bark from white birch trees,

And for pencil each uses a stick.

“When you write,” says the crow,

“Be careful and slow,

Make your letters look graceful, not thick.

Every birdie builds a nest,

In the place each thinks the best,

While the teacher gives good sound advice.

“All the sticks,” says the crow,

“You must lay in a row,

Before using one, look at it twice.”

All at once, with a cold blast

The rain comes falling thick and fast,

While the old pine tree groans in the gale.

“School is closed,” says the crow,

“You must all quickly go,

But to-morrow, come back without fail.”

—V. E. Scharff.



A BEE STORY.

"Well, you do amuse me!" laughed a fat drone, as a busy little worker-bee dropped upon the hive-sill, staggering beneath a load of pollen. "How many times have you done this, since I've been standing here?"

"Can't say, I'm sure," was the quiet answer; "I've no time to count."

"But why do you do it? You're as tired as you can be; and I'll be bound you're going off again!"

"Of course I am! There's not a moment to be lost, these fine days. There's the lime-harvest next week—that's our busiest time. We work day and night then."

"But why should you?" persisted the drone. "Why don't you get just enough honey out of the flowers for yourself—a sip here and there,

when you're hungry — and not go to toiling and moiling, bringing it in for other people? And that heavy pollen, too!"

The worker-bee smiled.

"But how selfish — how joyless our lives would be! How are our babies to be housed and fed — not to speak of winter coming, when there's nothing to be found to eat! And yourself too, Master Drone—what would you do?"

The drone looked down at his velvet legs.

"Well," he began, while she carefully wiped up some pollen that had dropped out of one of the pockets in her hind legs, "I suppose some folks are made to work, and some to eat. You can't expect me to get about like you, a creature of my proportions! Why, I should drop; the very idea makes me giddy!"

The worker-bee laughed softly.

"Have you ever tried it?"

"Well, no, I can't say I have. You see — I don't mean anything disrespectful — but you know you're an old maid. You were born to it. But I might have been our queen's consort. It's very trying to be born with ideas above your circumstances, I assure you."

The drone sighed heavily, but did not overlook a drop of honey that had fallen on the hive-sill.

"However," he continued, condescendingly, "I don't despise you — you can't help it. But you must acknowledge there's a difference between us. You can't expect me to go begging honey from the flowers!"

"You know how to eat it, then!" cried a bee, who, with some others, was fanning with her wings at the hive-door, "you lazy good-for-nothing! Oh, it's all very fine to stare at me; wait, my friend — he that will not work, neither shall he eat. We've no room for idlers here!"

In the meantime our friend had emptied her "baskets" of their golden burden, and emerged briskly from the hive.

"Stop a bit," cried the drone; "don't be in such a hurry! What does that sour old maid mean, about my days being numbered?"

"Time will show," was the sad answer.

But the drone broke in.

"I'm not an old maid!" — fanning furiously. "I'd quite as good a chance of being a queen as some of them; it's only the food they give

us that makes the difference! If I'd lived better when I was a grub, there's no knowing what I might have been."

"Sister, I'm not so sure of that," said our worker-bee quietly. "You weren't born to be a queen; but we're all born to work — and not for ourselves only!" she added joyfully. "To work is to live." And she lost herself, humming in the mignonette-bed.





THE FAIRY OF THE FLOWERS.

Little Marguerite was a shepherdess. Her father and mother had been dead several years, and to save the child from starvation her uncle had taken her into his home.

As the little girl grew older her uncle put her in charge of a flock of sheep, and told her to take them on the hill. Here the lambs jumped around and found their food. But little Marguerite had to keep a watchful eye over them and see that none of them got lost.

But one day, a big wolf got among the flock and when the sheep saw the blood-thirsty animal they ran away, and not one of them could be found again.

When Marguerite saw the wolf and what he had done, she began to cry pitifully. Trembling with fear from head to foot she returned to her uncle's cottage. Her uncle was a harsh and stern man, and Marguerite knew that he would be angry with her because the sheep were lost.

"Where is your flock?" he asked the child as soon as she approached the house.

She told him in a very few words what had happened. But there never was a more angry man in the world, than this little girl's uncle. First, he scolded her and accused her of laziness and carelessness. The more he raged and stormed, the more his passionate temper grew.

Then he took hold of Marguerite by her hair, which hung down her back in a long, beautiful black plait. The cruel man pulled her to the ground and hurt her most awfully.

But he was not satisfied yet. He went into his yard and got a stick, and when he came back gave her a severe beating. All this time, the poor innocent child cried in a most pitiful manner.

"Uncle, my uncle," she cried, "please let me alone; it was not my fault that the wolf came among my sheep."

But the heartless man had no feeling of mercy.

"Get out of my house!" he cried at last when his arms were tired beating the child, and he nearly lost his breath in his outburst of passion. "Get away from here, and never let me see your face again, unless you bring my sheep back."

Marguerite then turned and hurried away from the place as fast as she could. Although she did not know where to go, she was nevertheless glad to get away, because nobody would be fond of a place where such a cruel and inhuman man lived. The child ran straight into the forest, but it was so far away that she was nearly dead, when she got there. Here she sat down under a big tree and began to think what to do next.

"Oh, you cruel, cruel uncle!" she began to cry, "to beat and strike me as hard as you did, and so wrongfully, too. What would my darling mother say, if she knew the hard life I

have had since she has been dead? But what am I to do now? No home, no friends, no place to live, no bread to eat. Surely I shall die of hunger very soon, because in this lonely forest there is no food, or shelter for me."

Thus poor little Marguerite broke into lamentations. The tall, big trees shook their crowns of heavy foliage backward and forward, and gave vent to their sympathy in a deep, rustling sound. Even the blades of grass at her feet began to wilt and wither, when they heard the pitiful utterances of sorrow and woe from the little girl's lips.

Suddenly the sound of a light footstep fell on Marguerite's ear, and looking up she observed the form of a beautiful woman coming along through the trees. For a moment the child was afraid, and she got up to run away. But just then the vision called out:

"Do not be afraid, my child, no harm will befall you from me!"

The soft, sweet voice of the lady at once reassured Marguerite, and she sat down again, awaiting the stranger's approach. Noticing the disheveled appearance of the girl's hair,

her red eyes filled with tears, and the marks of violence from the uncle's beating on the bare arms, the lady said:

"What has been done to you, my child?"

Marguerite then related the story of her life in her own artless, childish manner, and when she told the stranger of the ill-treatment she had received from her uncle, the lady was touched to tears. Large pearls of liquid crystal rolled down her soft, pinky cheeks when she heard of the brutality of her bad uncle.

"My poor child," she cried, "how hard a life you have led, but now it shall all be changed. You come with me and I will take care of you. I am Flora, the fairy of flowers, and in the house where I live there is never any sorrow, pain nor distress. I am very glad I have found you. What is your name?"

"Marguerite," replied the little girl.

"Well, in commemoration of the hour I have found you, I will give this flower your name."

"Which flower?" asked Marguerite, in astonishment, who could not see anything but grass around her.

"There is one here," said the fairy; "it is just coming out of the ground from the tears I dropped a moment ago. Do you see it now? Well, over here is another.."

And so it was. Wherever the tears of the fairy had fallen on the ground a beautiful flower with white petals and a yellow centre had started up, and from that moment Marguerites have grown in this world.

"But your tears were white and these flowers are yellow in the middle," said Marguerite, who could not believe what the fairy had told her."

"The yellow centre was produced by the sun," replied the fairy. "Did you not notice the sun's reflection in the tear-drop as it fell to the ground? That reflection was yellow, and hence the centre of the flower is yellow."

Marguerite was much pleased with the flower, and she picked one and twined it among her curls. Then the fairy and the little girl went away. They walked along through the forest for miles and miles, but the child did not feel in the least fatigued.

At last, the fairy led the child into a valley.

A tiny stream was seen rushing along through a beautiful meadow, and, when they arrived there, Marguerite noticed the most exquisite garden of flowers she had ever seen in all her life.

The little house the fairy led her into was composed of all kinds of fragrant winding plants. The walls of the house were made of sunflowers, and the roof was covered with a myriad morning glories, whose blossoms shone through the green leaves like stars of purple, pink and milky hue.

Marguerite's eyes wandered in wondering amazement from flower to flower, and the fairy seemed to enjoy her bewilderment. From the very moment Marguerite entered the little house where Flora lived, she forgot all about the past and the pain her cruel uncle had inflicted upon her.

The next day the fairy took her all through the groves and gardens surrounding the little house and at every step the little girl observed new and more wondrous beauties of the floral world.

But one thing must be mentioned here,

there were no roses in that garden, for the simple reason that roses did not then exist.

However, when the fairy arrived at the end of the grove of flowers, she said to Marguerite:

"Do you see all those thorny bushes growing there? Well, they were planted by my great-grandmother thousands of years ago, and while she lived they were covered with the most beautiful red flowers. On the day of her death, however, all the flowers died, and none of them have ever come into bloom again, and I do not think they ever will."

Flora, the fairy, and her little friend lived very happily together. The little girl made herself very useful to the fairy by helping her to attend to the flowers and pull out the weeds that would sometimes creep up from the ground.

One day, Marguerite had nothing to do, and she went out among the thorn bushes. Suddenly she heard a voice, and when she stopped to listen she distinguished the following words:

"Prick your finger with a thorn

And a flower will blossom red as the morn."

Three times Marguerite heard these words; then she understood them, and approaching the bushes she pushed her finger against a thorn. The blood flowed out of the wound and ran along the stem of the bushes, but wherever it touched a beautiful red rose sprang into blossom. The little girl was overjoyed at the result, and she immediately called Flora and showed what she had done. The fairy was amazed when she saw the beautiful flowers.

"These are the flowers my great-grandmother used to have, too; now you must go with me to our queen and she will give you a reward, because she has said, that whoever would bring back the rose should be her friend."

Thus Marguerite came to the palace of the Queen of Fairies, and when Flora, the flower fairy, told the queen what Marguerite had done, she got up from her throne, embraced and kissed her. She also asked the little girl to remain with her at the palace, and Marguerite remained in fairyland forever afterward.



STORY OF THE SEEDS.

Long, long ago, two seeds lay beside each other in the earth, waiting. It was cold and rather wearisome; and to beguile the time, the one found means to speak to the other.

"What are you going to be?" said the one.

"I don't know," answered the other.

"For me," rejoined the first, "I mean to be

a rose. There is nothing like a splendid rose. Everybody will love me then."

"It's all right," whispered the second; and that was all he could say; for somehow, when he had said that, he felt as if all the words in the world were used up. So they were silent again for a day or two.

"O dear!" cried the first, "I have had some water. I never knew until it was inside me. I'm growing! I'm growing! Good-bye!"

"Good-bye?" repeated the other, and lay still and waited more than ever.

The first grew and grew, pushing itself straight up till at last it felt as if it was in the open air, for it could breathe. And what a delicious breath that was? It was rather cold but so refreshing. The flower could see nothing, for it was not quite a flower yet, only a plant; and they never see till their eyes come — that is till they open their blossoms, — then they are flowers quite.

So it grew and grew, and kept its head up very steadily, meaning to see the sky the first thing, and leave earth quite behind, as well as beneath it. But somehow or other, though

why it could not tell, it felt very much inclined to cry. At length it opened its eyes. It was morning and the sky was over its head; but alas! itself was no rose, only a tiny white flower. It felt more inclined to hang down its head and cry; but it still resisted, and tried to open its eyes wide, and to hold its head upright, and to look full at the sky.

"I will be a Star of Bethlehem at least!" said the flower to itself.

But its head felt very heavy, and a cold wind rushed over it, and bowed it down toward the earth. And the flower saw that the time of the singing bird had not come, that the snow covered the whole land, and that there was not a single flower in blossom but itself. And it half closed its leaves in terror, and the dismay of loneliness.

But at that instant it remembered what the other flower used to say; and it said to itself. "It's all right, I will be what I can." And thereon it yielded to the wind, dropped its head to the earth, and looked no more upon the sky, but on the snow.

And straightway the wind stopped, and the

cold died away, and the snow sparkled like pearls and diamonds and the flower knew that it was the holding of its head up that hurt it so; for that its body came of the snow, and that its name was Snowdrop. And so it said once more, "It's all right!" and waited in perfect peace.

"And what became of the other?" asked Harry.

"'I haven't done with this one yet,' said Hugh. 'I only told you it was waiting. One day a pale, sad looking girl, with a thin face, large eyes, and long, white hands, came hanging her head like the snowdrop, along the snow where the flower grew.

"She spied it, smiled joyously, and saying, 'Ah, little sister, are you come?' stooped and plucked the snowdrop. It trembled and died in her hand, which was a heavenly death for a snowdrop; for had it not cast a gleam of summer, pale as it had been itself, upon the heart of the sick girl?

"'And the other?' repeated Harry.

"The other had a long time to wait; but it did grow one of the loveliest roses ever seen.

And at last it had the highest honor ever granted to a flower, which was to be placed by a loving mother upon the breast of her little child, as she arrayed it for entrance into the heavenly kingdom."



THE LITTLE VINE.

A little vine had started up among the grass blades. It had tried to climb, but the little grass blades, although they tried very hard, could not bear it up, and the little vine sank back upon the warm earth.

"I do so want to see the sky," said the little vine one day, when the grass had grown up so thick it could hardly peep out.

"Try to reach up to my trunk," said a big old oak overhead.

"I should be very glad if you would let me," said the little vine.

"Let you? Of course I will," laughed the old tree. "What am I big and strong for, if not to help little folks like you?"

Then the little vine began to climb. How easy it was to cling to that rough old bark! And how fast she grew!

Before the summer was half over she was away up among the branches! She could see the sky now. It seemed very near. And there were birds in the tree, and hundreds of pretty shining insects. The vine danced in the breezes, and was the happiest little vine in all the land.

By and by autumn came, The old tree began to drop its leaves. The little vine had changed its color. It was a beautiful blazing red now.

One day some woodmen came with axes over their shoulders.

"Just see that red woodbine," said the leader. "I was going to cut that tree down;

but it would be a pity to ruin that beautiful vine."

Then the woodmen passed on.

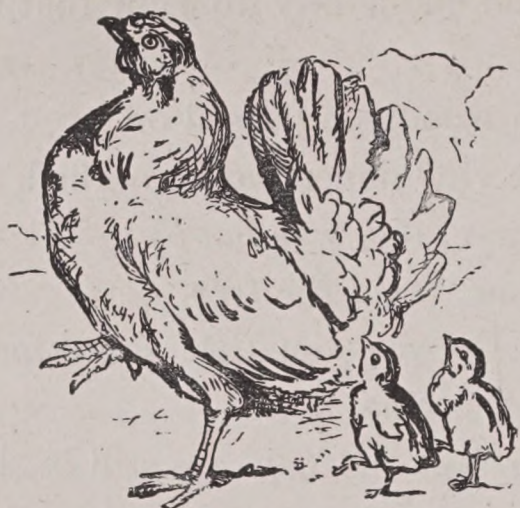
The little vine danced and laughed.

The old tree, too, was happy. "It was you that saved me," said the tree.

"Oh, no, it was you that saved me months ago!" said the vine.

The vine and the oak are still in the wood, happy as they can be, together; but they have never yet agreed which saved the other.





THE LOST CHICKEN.

Chick never understood how it happened, for she only had been chasing a cricket a little way, but all at once she found herself alone. She could hear the "cluck," "cluck," of her hen-mamma far off, but could not find her nor make her hear her cries.

What could she do? She ran about in the tall meadow grass, bewildered and frightened; and now the darkness began to settle down and the dew to fall.

Then she crouched under the leaves, shivering, for warm as the weather was, she missed her mamma's warm feather blankets,

and cried in her chicken fashion, as hard as she could. How she did wish she had let that unlucky cricket alone!

Morning came and found her trembling and cold in the wet grass. The daisies were all watching for the sun to come up, and took no notice of her. Some belated little bluets, deep down in the grass, looked up at her with tears in their tiny eyes, but said nothing.

She tried to dress her wet feathers a bit, they made her so uncomfortable, and to peck a grasshopper or two, but in some way they seemed to have lost their rich flavor.

All at once she darted under a bush by the wall quivering with a new fear; she had caught sight of a hawk sailing noiselessly above the meadow with his long, light wings, and knew there was danger.

How often she had heard her mother's *curr-rrr* of warning. Her heart beat very fast, but the kind bush sheltered and hid her, until the hawk, thinking, perhaps, that he had been deceived and there was no tender chicken there, flew away to find other prey. And now Chick crept along close by the wall; for, some-

way, the gray old stones seemed like company. Would she never find her way home?

The sun was high up now and warm, so she crept through an opening, to the sunny side of the wall, and sat down to rest. She was almost asleep when she heard a footstep in the grass, and there was a little girl with a basket on her arm!

Now Chick did not like little girls, simply because she knew so little about them — so she darted under the rocks. But Nan, for it was she, had caught sight of her, had her cornered and held her in two warm hands before Chick new what had happened.

"You poor, lost little baby!" cried the child "where is your home?" but Chick answered nothing, only struggled as hard as she could to get away.

Nan held her firmly but gently, carried her home and set her down in the farm-yard.

There were a lot of little black and white chickens like his brothers and sisters at home! But their mother would not allow strangers in there home and ran at "Whitie," for so Nan had named her, pecked her on the head and nearly knocked her over.

"You poor little thing!" cried Nannie, "there is nothing for you, as I see, but to be a house chicken."

But, being a "house chicken," was not so very bad, after all, for she had a box of hay, which Nannie changed often, to keep it clean and sweet, near to the kitchen fire. She could run about the floor when she wanted exercise, and was treated to bits of meat, sweet meal and oats.

When Nannie went out to play or work under the old elm-tree, she would take "Whitie" with her, and let her peck the fresh green grass and clover, or catch the grasshoppers.

Sometimes, Nan would dig a small spot in the ground, often bringing a worm, which "Whitie" always grabbed with a "wheet-tee-teet" of satisfaction.

It really seemed as though "Whitie" loved Nannie as well as though she had been a real hen, for now, when she was quite a chick, she preferred Nan's company to that of her feathered friends.

Nannie loved her, too, and watched her

feathers and comb anxiously as they grew; fearing to see her appear at last in roosters' garb. Nan knew in that case, Chick would be killed and eaten, for there were too many of the noisy, greedy fellows already about the place.

And now grown to henhood, (for a hen "Whitie" proved to be) she had the liberty of the house, barn and all the yard.

I suspect her training had made her peculiar, for none of the young pullets seemed to fancy having her perch with them.

One day in early winter, Nannie came to the barn, caught "Whitie" up, and with tears in her eyes, told her how she longed to own a book; "A real nice book, called Botany, "Whitie," with pictures and stories about these dear flowers we used to see in the grass last summer," sobbed Nan.

Of course "Whitie" could answer nothing, but somehow Nannie always felt comforted when she talked her sorrows out to her pets.

Now mind, I am not claiming that "Whitie" understood, but the next day, when Nan was at school she crept into the house, and up into

a work-basket on the table, and sat there a long time. When Nannie came home and went to get her work, what should she spy but a beautiful white egg in the folds of her work. Mamma had known all the time, but had left it for a surprise.

"Now," said Mamma, "you may sell all "Whitie's" eggs and buy your book." How delighted Nan was, and how anxiously she looked for Chick's presents, as she called them, when she came home at night.

And "Whitie" let scarcely a day pass without her visit to the work-basket. When Spring opened and the flowers came again, you might have seen Nannie, any afternoon, making her way to the fields with "Whitie" at her heels, and with "Fairylend of Flowers" hugged up against her delighted little heart.





PETER'S STORY.

One night Nan ran into the house bringing a very young bluebird.

"Oh! see, mamma! may I keep this for a pet?" But mamma thought birdie's mother could not spare it any more than mamma could do without Nannie; so they both together went out under the great elm in the door-yard, where Nan had found it on the ground below, and looked among the branches for the nest; but no nest was to be found and no birds were calling, so Nan nestled the trembling little thing against her warm cheek, made a nice cotton nest for it, and placing both bird and nest in a box, set it in the sunshine.

Soon birdie, beginning to feel more comfortable and happy, opened his mouth for food. How delighted Nan was! She fed him with worms, flies and bits of bread till it was a wonder he lived through it.

After that, no matter how often he caught sight of her above the rim of his box, he would stretch open his big yellow mouth; and Nannie never disappointed him. Twenty times a day she would leave her work or her play to feed "Peter" as papa called him.

One day, when Nannie sat sewing, with two great tears rolling down her cheeks, (she did dislike a needle so much) Peter did a wonderful thing; he scrambled up to the edge of his box, perched there a moment and pitched headlong into Nannie's lap; and there he stayed, taking no notice of scissors, spools or work.

Every day afterward, when Nannie had her "stint," he perched somewhere about her, on her shoulder or lap or on the window-seat near by, where he would sun himself and try to sing. And what a cheering little companion he was, to be sure; someway Nannie enjoyed her work

better when he was by, and came to the end of her seams almost before she knew it.

When he had wholly outgrown his box, he chose the mantel-piece for his resting place at night, and no amount of coaxing would make him use the perch provided for him.

There he would sit rolled up in a little ball apparently sound asleep, but if any one of us went up to the shelf he would whisk his head from under his wing, peck our lips or fingers, and scold away with all his little might. He used to go out of doors, coming in whenever he chose, and loved dearly to perch on the window-ledge outside and sing. But he soon made a lot of bluebird acquaintances and went away oftener, staying longer, but always coming back at night, and always seeming especially glad to see Nannie.

One day, when the birds were all talking of going to warmer lands, I suppose the temptation to go was too strong for him, for we never saw him afterward. Nan cried a little and missed him a great deal; but she used to say as bravely as she could, "How happy little Peter must be; I am glad we did not cage him."

RED CLOVER.

Crimson clover I discover

By the garden gate,
And the bees about

her hover,

But the robins wait.

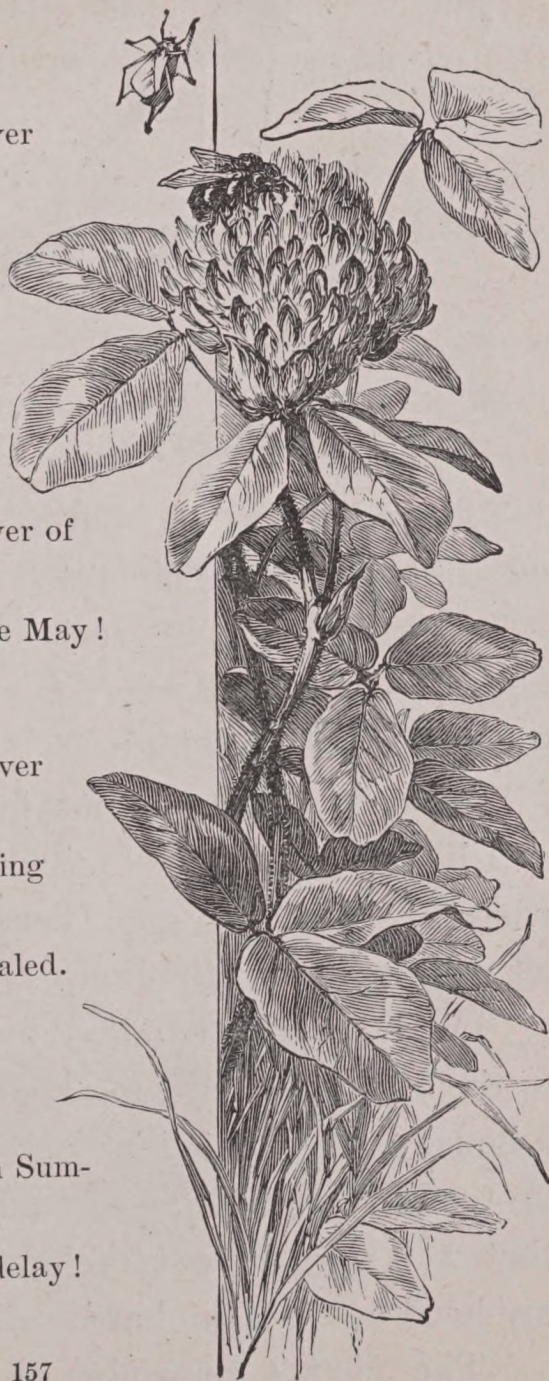
Sing, robins, sing,

Sing a rounde-
lay,—

'Tis the latest flower of

Spring,

Coming with the May!



Crimson clover I discover

In the open field,

Mellow sunlight brooding
over,

All her warmth revealed.

Sing, robin, sing,

'Tis no longer
May,—

Fuller bloom doth Sum-
mer bring.

Ripened thro' delay!



A GOLDFINCH'S STORY.

"I wonder if you children know how much we wild birds prize our freedom.

"Jack Frost came early in the season one night last year, and when morning came I was too stiff to fly very high.

"Now my swamp is not far from the road, so I hopped into it just as some children were passing. 'O' cried one, 'here is a little bird; let us take him to the house.'

"Oh, how they handled me about from one to the other, and how my heart did beat! Into a house I was carried at last; a lady took me up tenderly, but I was so anxious to get away that I struggled out of her hand and dashed my head against the hard wall.

"The next I remember, I was in a prison

with wires all around me. I was so unhappy, and tried to thrust myself between the wires, but could not.

"They frightened me, too, thrusting water and food into my prison, but I could touch neither.

" 'I know,' said the lady at last, 'you are a little wild bird, and long for your own dear home in the alder bushes.'

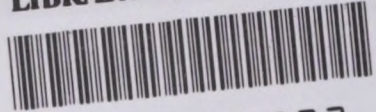
"With that she took my prison away out in the fields, where no children could see me, opened the door and away I darted over the pastures and down into the swamp.

"You may be sure I sang then as I never had sung before."



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